PILGRIMS OF THE PLAINS

KATE · A · APLINGTON

PILGRIMS OF THE PLAINS

"DEYA"

PILGRIMS OF THE PLAINS

A ROMANCE
OF THE
SANTA FÉ TRAIL

BY
KATE A. APLINGTON

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THE·PLIMPTON·PRESS
[W·D·O]
NORWOOD·MASS·U·S·A

TO

ELIZABETH BUTLER GENTRY

DESCENDANT OF

CAVALIER AND FRONTIERSMAN

THIS STORY OF A HISTORIC OLD TRAIL
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED
BY THE AUTHOR

A PERSONAL WORD

THERE are certain readers who hurry through the first few chapters of a book, and turn impatiently to the last one to see what the ending of the tale may be. What is not essential to the "story" has little interest for them. "Preface," "Introduction," or "Foreword" do not exist, in so far as they are concerned. And if an author is inclined to slyly criticize their little foibles and peculiarities he may safely do so — in the "Preface" — and they will never find it out.

That there are a few people of this sort, we will admit. That they are in the majority we must deny. In this broad land there are hundreds of thousands of careful discriminating readers — true book-lovers — who take up a new book with something of fondness in their touch. They note the title-page, the illustrations, and then, before they take the plunge into the story itself, they read the introductory pages, — as you are now reading this page.

As author and reader we have heretofore been as strangers, yet I hope that you may take this story

and its people into your heart. I hope that you will like to travel the Trail with them, and, above all, that you may believe in them, and in all the incidents of the journey as true.

To me, the author, it seems almost the truest story ever written, and it is because of its truth, that I dare to think it not unworthy of your regard.

There *was* a big white house with double porches, with a spring branch near by, and a row of beehives and a locust-lane, still sweet in my memory. There were the uncles and aunts, and the forty-two cousins who used to come over to spend the day. In Galena there was a house whose front door was in the roof. I know the Mississippi, when its waters are low, and when they are in flood. My eyes have been dazzled by the glitter of its sun-lit waves, and I have dreamed of the beautiful pictures that its shores presented to my eyes. I was on a boat that raced up-stream against the "Phil Sheridan." I have seen the negroes working at night in the light of the red torches, and listened to their songs. And once the man in the pilot-house let the young girl hold the wheel, oh, yes, for ever so long, and he told her strange stories of famous men whom he had known — Kit Carson, and Benton, and Jim Bridger, and Colonel Bowie.

Yes, I knew the Newells — the old Scotch couple. I have listened by the hour as they quoted pages

from Bobby Burns's poems, and sang their "auld Scotch sangs," some of which they taught to me — songs whose music has never been in print.

There was a long, long journey over almost trackless plains; and at night our carriage was converted into a "Ladies' Cabin." And the face-cream was eaten up, and there was nothing left for the alkali-scorched faces but bears' grease! Flapjacks so peppered with dirt they had to be smothered in molasses to make them go down, — there was nothing imaginary in them.

The Mexican with his furtive sidelong glances came to share our campfire one night. And the story of the climbing of Eagle Mountain has its foundation in an actual occurrence. For years it was a nightmare dream to me, and even now I do not like to recall it.

Anna, the golden-haired one, whom the Mexicans openly adored as if she were one of the pictured saints, is not a wholly imaginary person, and many of the others are almost like the real friends whom I have known and loved, although there is no one of them who has an exact counterpart in actual life.

Stored up on the closet shelves in the dim corners of my mind were many fascinating pictures, exciting incidents, and interesting characters, such as these. One day I resolved that I would take them out, and put them away in order. Some-

how it happened that they almost made themselves into a story.

The town where I live, Council Grove, is the most famous spot on one of the famous old trails of this country, and naturally, the story became a story of the Santa Fé Trail. When I saw what was likely to happen, I prepared myself for it, by talking with those who have traveled the long road to Santa Fé behind their ox-teams. I read government reports, delved in historical collections, and collected newspaper clippings.

I drew a big map, with the camping-places properly indicated, and the dates marked as they should be. Upon it was written the details of the natural scenery, and notes regarding the plants and animals, as well as the tribes of Indians that would naturally belong to the different localities. This map hung on the wall before me as I wrote, and this served as the foundation on which the story was built. I have had it constantly before me for four years, and I have told the story over and over again for the same four years, so it is not strange if to me it seems as if it almost might be true.

I wonder if it will seem true to you! I hope it may.

KATE ADELE APLINGTON

COUNCIL GROVE, KANSAS,
November 16, 1912.

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Pilgrims of the Plains

Pilgrims of the Plains

CHAPTER I

THE FIRE-LIT HEARTH

I WAS the last one in the procession of girls, when we took our candles last night to go up to bed. The procession was sedate and orderly enough till we were half-way up the stairs; and then the twins, scrambling up in front of Martha and Lucy, tried to blow the candle out. In the midst of the noisy romping I slipped away, and went back to the hearth where the firelight shone warm and bright; and I curled down on the rug, drowsily watching the thin flames playing around the half-burnt logs.

I did not know that father and mother were near me till mother drew her rocking-chair up close beside me and laid her hand on my head. I nestled comfortably against her knee while she undid my hair and braided it for the night, and finished the work with a soft light kiss in the middle of my forehead, just as she used to do when I was a little, little girl — before the twinnies came.

Father, with his eyes cast down and his hands clasped behind him, paced restlessly from the hearth

to his desk, and out into the front entry, where our traveling chests almost blocked the way. I had not been thinking of the journey that is before us, until the fire blazed up and showed me the chests there, all packed, ready for lifting into the spring-wagon when Monday morning comes.

I cannot get over the strangeness of it; that my frail brother is to be sent so far away from home, with only me, his sister—Delia Augusta Randall—as his nurse and companion; that we are to cross the wide western plains, with a trading caravan; that we are to visit the old Spanish city of Santa Fé! I cannot believe it, though for the past three weeks we have dreamed and talked of nothing else, and for the past two weeks have done nothing else but make preparation for the journey.

The sweet quiet of the night was broken by a sudden gusty wind from the east. The branches of the lilacs whipped sharply against the panes. The light ashes flew circling up the chimney, like a swarm of white butterflies. John, who has the front bedroom now, coughed the prolonged racking cough that we so much dread to hear, and I went in with mother to close the window and to tuck the bed-clothes closer about him. His arms were out and all uncovered, but he promised he'd keep them under the blankets, if we'd go to bed, and go to sleep.

I heard the clock strike two; I heard the clock strike three; I heard the clock strike four, and then I thought it time to get up!

I went into mother's room, and softly kissed her cheek — and she did not waken, as I fondly but selfishly hoped she would do.

I looked in where the girls were. Little motherly Martha had taken the naughty twinnies into bed with her, and Lucy lay curled up asleep in their trundle-bed.

I partly dressed myself, and went out of doors, along by the spring branch, up through the orchard, and back again down the lane; — and the locust blossoms dropped a sweet cold dew on my face and hair.

I was glad to creep back into my warm bed! I brought my Journal with me; and here I am, propped up with the bolster and pillows, writing when I ought to be down-stairs this minute helping with the breakfast.

I can smell the coffee, and hear the rattle of the dishes as Margaret sets the table. All the girls are busy but lazy Deya. Oh, oh! I thought I wouldn't be left very long to indulge myself after this fashion! It is Mary-Belle who is calling, — "Dee-ya! Dee-ya! Breakfast's waitin'!"

CHAPTER II

FOR THE SAVING OF THE LAD

I HAVE two or three idle hours before me: there is not a thing to do, for the work was all done up before ever the girls and father started off to meeting. There is no one for me to talk to, for John and mother are out on the front porch — he lying on the couch and she sitting by his side, watching over him ——

I have been turning the blank pages of this my new Journal book, and I found myself regarding them earnestly and intently, as if I might in some way discern, beneath the fair white surface, the story that is to be traced upon them — the story of the journey that is to be.

The thought of the future, uncertain as it is, makes me shiver with dread. Yet I must believe that in the end all will be well.

We ought not to doubt that this that has come to pass is a special Providence in John's behalf, though it has seemed to come as by an accident — just the adding of a postscript to a letter, written by Hiram

Hubbard to Deacon Gentry. Hiram told us about it when he came down from Galena to talk things over.

"You see," Hiram said, "I'm to go out with the Deacon's caravan as wagon-master again this year, and I were writin' him when I'd be ready to make the start from Galena, and after I put my name to the end of it there was a inch to spare, and so I jest set down the news I'd been hearin' from Dixon, — seein' as how he used to live here. 'Bout the tornado sweepin' through the county, and how your two boys were ketched out in it — and George drowned in the river, — and John's health so poorly ever sence — and his cough, and all. I had clean forgot 'bout the Deacon and you folks bein' sech great friends till here come a letter from him, bidding me to come down to try to persuade you to let the boy go West with me.

"The Deacon says it will be the savin' of the lad if he can take him with him acrost the plains: and I don't see any reason to doubt it. Jest like it was with Will Gibbs, that lived over by Grand Detour — you remember Will Gibbs, that had the quick consumption, as they called it — well, four years of teamin' it out on the plains has worked a seemin' miracle, for him. He's as stout and hearty as you would wish to see anybody, — and what it done for

him it ought to do for your John, sturdy little chap as he always were. I remember, when him and George was playin' round 'mong my tools in the blacksmith shop — burnin' their fingers on the hot irons and sech like — George were ten and John not more'n seven I reckon, and I teached 'em to rastle, — and it were never John that were the first to holler 'Nough!' — even though he were so much the littler. He were the pluckiest little feller I ever did see; and I don't s'pose he's changed sech a turrible lot jest along o' one spell of sickness! He'd be one of that kind that would have an amazin' strong grip on life, as I take it. They is that kind, that will stand twicet what other folks does, before they're ready to give up — and then they don't give up! — and that sperit will make him pull through, if he has only the half of half a chanst!"

As we talked it over afterward mother tried to smile; and as for the rest of us, it was as if the purpose of the journey were already almost accomplished; — we were so sure that John would come back to us strong and well, even as the Deacon had said.

The new cheerfulness in the home atmosphere and the excitement of getting ready for the journey

are having the best possible effect on John. He is gaining strength with every day. All the forces of his life seem to be rallying to sustain him till the fine pure air of the prairies can begin its healing restorative work. Nothing could have been better for John than to have Hiram with us. He stayed for three days though he was, I know, in a hurry to get back to Galena, to finish his preparations there. Hiram is a born story-teller and romancer. He does not hesitate to add a little something to the truth, if it makes a story better worth listening to. It isn't deception: he is too transparent about it for that: it is like the license the poet is privileged to take, — like the rhetorician's figure of speech. And then there is always a very visible twinkle in his eye that seems to give us permission to do a little mental subtraction as we listen.

He has a fondness for big round numbers. "A million buffalo in one bunch, yes, that's what I'm sayin'! I seen 'em, — yes, and felt 'em, too! The ground trembled like they was a yearthquake, and the bellerin' and tramplin' of all them hoofs was worse'n thunder! And wild horses! Out there, nigh Pawnee Rock, one time, we was mighty nigh run down by a monstrous herd of 'em — hundreds of thousands of 'em, and not one less! And when we wanted to ketch a few, we shot 'em! That's the

way they does it out there — nicks 'em acrost the neck bone, deep enough to stun 'em but not to kill 'em. It's a sight to see them wild things 'broken in' — the way they fights for their liberty! They have to mighty nigh kill 'em before ever they gives up!"

Hiram thinks there is no place like Westport (where Deacon Gentry has his store). "It's right on the edge of civilization, as one might say. They ain't nothin' else beyond it. They ain't even a name for none of that country till you come plum to Mexico. But Westport is a thrivin' smart town and likely to keep on a growin', as I figger it. The Deacon's firm, Gentry and Newell, is doin' a powerful big business — a makin' money, hand over fist. I reckon the Deacon must have turned over nigh to fifty thousand dollars, sence he went there to Westport, — four years, come next Christmas.

"Some of them fellers from Kentucky and the South talk 'bout the Deacon bein' a 'master hand at a bargain,' and it's a fact that he does squiz a dollar pretty tight; but with his friends he's as free handed as they make 'em. He made no bones o' givin' me a hundred a month last season when I was wagon-master with the caravan, and this time he's promised to raise me to a hundred and ten. And that'll be for the full year. William Newell, that runs the branch house out to Santa Fé, is comin' home and

I'm to stay there and take his place, to see that the raskilly Mexes don't steal the Company blind!

"I'm thinkin' I'll make a good spec this year, for the Deacon is goin' to advance me my wages and invest it in trade, and that, with what I saved from last year, will make a right tidy sum.

"Deacon Gentry mostly calculates that he'll double or maybe thribble whatever he puts into his goods. Calico, what brings two dollars a yard in Santa Fé, only costs twenty-five cents in St. Louis, and it's the same way with silks and cutlery-stuff and fine liquors. The profits is *enormous*, that's what they be! Course one has to reckon out impost-duties — and they is scandalous high — and all the ordinary expenses, not forgettin' accidents, which they is sure to be a plenty of; but, takin' it all-in-all, the profits is 'nough to satisfy any ordinary reasonable man."

Hiram hesitated, and cleared his throat, and in his most persuasive and engaging way went on.

"You see, Square, I know 'bout that there money you got from the sale of your York State prop'ty. Doctor Uttley told me. I don't know how 'tis that a man's neighbors gets to know so much 'bout a man's private bus'ness, but so 'tis! Well, him and me were kinder talkin' that it mightn't be such a bad plan for you to resk some of it in goods for the

Santa Fé trade, same's the Deacon's a-doin'. It's a pretty good time for a man to ontie the strings of his money-bags when he's got the chanst to double his capital, and all within six months! Now don't it look so?"

The gold was indeed lying untouched in the bottom drawer of the desk, — in the bags just as it came from York State. The days have been too full of trouble for father to care about it or think of ways of investing it. But now he is feeling differently and he thanked Hiram for reminding him of this opportunity.

John took up with the idea at once and commenced to figure on the possible, and impossible, profits; and he seemed to take so much interest in the business that father wrote to Deacon Gentry at once that he should furnish a good outfit — wagons, teams, and goods — to the extent of ten thousand dollars' worth, and have them ready against the time that the caravan should start for Santa Fé.

It was not then fully decided that I should go with John; so, in the letter, there was nothing said about me. Anna, Hiram's wife, has let Mr. Hiram know that she does not intend to be left behind in Galena, while he is spending the winter in Santa Fé. "She jest put down her foot that she was goin' with me this trip, whether or no! And I ain't reelly

objectin', only jest 'nough to keep her on the tenter-hooks a bit. She's that mild it's right divertin' to see her when she's a mite stirred up!"

It is a little unusual for women to go with the caravans, and I know Hiram was thinking of Anna's comfort and pleasure when he tried to persuade mother that it would be a fine thing for me to go with John.

"You see, Mrs. Randall," Hiram said, "two women-folks can go anywhere together and be happy and contented, and Anna and Miss Deya would get along powerful well together. And havin' his sister 'long with him it would be more comfortable and homelike for John. As far as hardships is concerned, them that's lived here in Illinoys for the last five year ain't got no call to be afeared of what's likely to happen out on the plains. We, all on us, knows a thing or two 'bout Injins and varmints and storms and sech as that. The Trail from Independence to Santa Fé's as safe as the road from here to Pe-o-ry. Troops patrols it regler, and the Injins ain't no more obstreperous there than they is 'round here. I tell you, last season we only seen Injins twicet—and they was the beggin' kind, and not in any way what you could call hos-tile.

"Miss Deya would like it first-rate, I bet! We'd ketch a wild pony for her to ride; and she'd find the prairies jest covered with the purtiest kind of

posies; and down to Santa Fé they'd be fandangoes and sech-like, and guitars a-playin', and all. They ain't no doubt she'd be right int'rested."

The minute he spoke I knew I had been dyin' to go, — only I had not thought it possible. Up to this time mother had not been at all reconciled to the thought of parting with John — each day as it passed made it seem only more and more hard — but now she yielded, all at once. Though her eyes filled with tears, she breathed a sigh, as of relief, "Yes, if Deya goes ——" and that was the way she gave her consent.

This was two weeks ago, and since that time we have been busy as bees, getting ready. It is fortunate that mother is always forehanded with her spinning and weaving. She'd think herself thriftless and slack if she did not always have on hand enough of linens and linseys and jaconets and jeans for several seasons' wearing. The big closet shelves were full and all we had to do was choose and take what was needed.

"Many hands make light work," and where there are five girls in a family a little stint of sewing is soon done. Uncle Asaph said we chattered "like a passel of blackbirds," and I know we never stopped to punctuate our sentences except as we stopped to put a knot in our thread, or to thread our needles.

When it came time to pack our boxes everybody wanted to help, and they all had suggestions to make. I really tried to follow Uncle Asaph's advice — not to put in any foolish finery and fal-lals, — but Lucy kept insisting that I ought to take my best clothes, and though I said no to that, she did manage to slip in two of my second-best gowns, and the red morocco slippers, and the red plaid silk that father bought for me in Washington, when he and George and I went back there to see President Harrison inaugurated.

I told Lucy it was ridiculous to think of taking a gown like that out on the plains.

"'Tisn't for the plains! It's for Santa Fé. You are going to Santa Fé, aren't you? And didn't you hear what Hiram said about the fandangoes and parties they'll be having? The Deacon being so well thought of, you will have invitations of course, and you wouldn't want to go in your old delaine and scandalize your friends and fam-i-lee, I hope!"

When Lucy makes up her mind, it's the easiest way just to let her have her way! She had packed the silk gown, with the mitts and undersleeves and all, in the very bottom of the chest, under the bottom tray, so it should not get crumpled and crushed, and I did not take it out. Maybe I will

be glad to have it with me. Maybe I will have occasion to wear it.

This foolish talk about clothes! — but it is only that I have nothing else to do. I am trifling away the time till the folks come home, and trying not to think of the weary miles, the weary hours, that lie between the present and the time of our home-coming. Just at this moment I feel a strange sinking of the heart. The house is so still — so lonely. I am sitting at father's desk ——

Last night I was sitting beside father on the settle, and he told me that there was something in the way of business that mother thought I ought to know.

"I have been thinking that as John has shown such an interest in this trading venture to Santa Fé, that I ought to have the purchase made in his name. The responsibility might be not a bad thing for him, and it is only setting him up in business a little earlier than I had thought to do. And so, when I wrote to the Deacon a few days ago, I told him to have the invoices made out in the firm name of Randall and Randall."

I was a little puzzled by the half quizzical look upon father's face, and by the tone of his voice as he said the last words. He seemed to be waiting for me to speak, and so I said, half-doubtfully, "You, and John?"

At that he smiled almost gaily. "No, not at all! Randall and Randall in this case means sister and brother — Deya and John! What is strange in that, my child? 'It is only just, — so your mother and I both say. It is what I would have done for George if he had lived, — and now it is right that I should do this for you."

It was almost under his breath that he said, "Did you think, my daughter, that we have not known how you have tried to fill George's place in the home? — how many of his duties you have taken upon yourself? And now there are new responsibilities that must be laid upon you, responsibilities too heavy for your young shoulders — only there is no one else ——"

"John's health and comfort will depend, largely, upon you. You must be a brother as well as a sister to him. You must prove yourself manly as well as womanly. You must take George's place, — and your own, besides!"

Praise does not make one proud. Praise is chastening — when one knows so well how difficult it is going to be to deserve it.

It was a very sober and a very humble Deya who knelt by her bedside last night.

CHAPTER III

A FAMILY PARTY

THE roads are not so bad, and John has stood the trip, thus far, better than we had dared to hope!

To-night while father was staking out the horses, I tied the buffalo robes to some bushes that were close by the fire, and so made a cozy little sheltered nook; and father and John are sitting there talking comfortably together, while I am trying to carry out my resolution to write a little every day in my book. I dare say I will keep this Journal in a scatter-brain, haphazard sort of fashion. Martha hinted as much! I always like to begin a diary, but there are always so many things happening to make one forget, or put off writing till a more convenient time. And when I look at a dozen or more blank dates I get discouraged and stop. But this time I have promised myself seriously that I will write down everything of importance that happens on this journey — perhaps not just at the minute, but anyway before I have a chance to disremember

it! When we get out on the prairie there will be many tedious hours when I will be glad to have this to turn to for occupation. I know how it will be. The men-folks will be off, enjoying the pleasures of the chase — hunting deer and buffalo — and while they are galloping across valleys and out of sight over the hills, Anna and I will be obliged to sit quietly in our neat traveling carriage, with our hands primly folded in our laps — perhaps!

Before I forget it I ought to tell of our last afternoon at home — only yesterday afternoon, and it seems a week ago. The day was not at all as we had hoped it would be — a long quiet restful day — a time for saying those last loving words that mean so much at parting; but perhaps it was best as it was. In the middle of the afternoon the kinfolks began to "drop in," and by four o'clock the yard and porches and house were "putty well crowded-up," as Uncle Asaph said. There were uncles and aunts and cousins and cousins-in-law — father's folks and mother's folks — Randalls and Warners and Demings and Smiths — forty-six of them, all told. Mary-Belle counted them when she set the plates around for supper.

Mother would have the cloth spread out on the grass in the front-yard, so there would be no neces-

sity for anyone to have to wait for the second table.

"I never can enjoy my food properly," mother says, "if the children have to wait — poor little things, all of them wondering if there's going to be cake and chicken left for them, after we grown-ups are through eating!"

When Aunt Sarah and Aunt Augusta and Aunt Electa began to unpack their baskets, there was little doubt in anyone's mind that there would be enough of everything to "go round," but we all ate together just the same.

The chests that we thought were all ready for lifting into the wagon, had to be opened and repacked, for everyone brought something in the way of a gift, for John or for me, — books and wristers and a wammus for John, and a big, horrid, sharp "skinning knife" that he liked better than anything else. And there was a "kiss-me-quick" for me, and a reticule and porte-monnaie, and another diary book and the loveliest toilet-box that cousin Lottie made — the outside all covered with tiny sea-shells, and fitted on the inside with a mirror set in the lid, and there were divisions in the box for comb and brushes, and for the two jars of "face-cream" (which was Aunt Hattie B's gift) — made from the famous "Nellie Custis recipe."

"You will need it," Aunt Hattie B. said, "when you get out on the prairie, to keep your face from freckling and blistering, for the sun and wind out there must be awful."

Uncle Jabez laughed.

"It will take more of that stuff than she's got to keep her face delicate and fair as you'd like to have it. She's none so white now, Deya ain't, and by the time she comes back after crossing that desert country twice, there ain't no telling what she'll look like — a copper colored Indian, probably!"

It did not seem at all like the Sabbath! The children forgot that it was not an ordinary week-day picnic gathering, and they played "Chase the Squirrel" and all their games, and no one cared to remind them that it was the first day of the week.

And, for the rest of us, the hours were given up to trivialities and gaiety, and laughter. They would have it so. And when it began to be dusk and it was time to go, there were no tearful good-byes to be said! They would only talk of the big Thanksgiving feast that should celebrate our return, of the bags of money that John and Deya would be proudly showing, of the romantic stories that they would be telling, — and they drove away down the locust lane, still laughing and singing.

So, in foolish gay fashion we spent those last

hours, and it did make the parting easier for us all. We were able to keep up the fiction of cheerfulness after they were gone — and when we said Good-night — and that was hard ——

It was not yet daylight when father took his place on the front seat of the spring wagon, — and John and I waved Good-bye to mother and the girls.

CHAPTER IV

THE OAK TREE INN

THE wagon is drawn up under the friendly shelter of a wide-branched oak tree; at our feet a clear stream bubbles up out of the rocks: a high bank rises in the north to shut out the cold winds from the little grassy hollow.

We are not the only travelers who have rested and refreshed themselves at this woodland caravansery. Careless and cruel guests some of them have been, for the gnarly and twisted trunk of the old tree is blackened with smoke, and charred to its very heart by the flames of their campfires. Yet the tree goes on living — lifting its head to the blue of heaven — stretching out its protecting arms over the earth — bravely trying to fulfil its natural destiny as best it may, in spite of the fires that have burnt into the heart.

It hasn't stopped raining for a minute all day long. When I woke up at daylight it was pouring down hard, so I thought I never would be able to get breakfast, but father got a little fire started — a smoky, soggy, sulky fire — and I fixed the coffee

in the pail, and the bacon in the skillet, and John's broth in the tin cup, before ever I got out of the wagon; and I took them and the umbrella and made a run for it! Lucky the umbrella was a big one! Father held it over the fire and over me, and somehow the breakfast was cooked. But the rain ran off from the umbrella ribs, and fell into the hot fat, and it sizzled and spattered and burned my wrist, and the flame flared up in my face — and my temper flared up, too, but only for a minute.

Before breakfast was half over we decided that the rain was rather good fun after all — John, especially, but then it wasn't John's wrist that was burned!

We had to sit on the floor in the back part of the wagon, as the wind drove the rain directly in our faces when we tried to sit on the front seat with father. We piled the robes around us and sat there cozy and warm, and played checkers, while the horses splashed along through water and mire, and toiled up the rocky hills.

The checkermen slid all over the board, and when we went sliding down a clayey slope my book — this Journal book — slipped through under father's feet, and he just caught it as it was trying to leap overboard.

He wiped the rain-drops from it, and, looking to me for permission, he read part of what I had written.

He smiled a little as he read the inscription, "From Sister Martha," and said:

"It was well thought of, on Martha's part, to provide you with this book, and I see you have made a beginning. You will not keep it — of course you will not — as Martha would; but I do not know as that is necessary, or desirable. Martha is a dear precise little maid, and her diary is something the family could not well do without, so particular as she is to set down every prosaic family happening, with its proper date! But you will be seeing strange and exciting things, and may well follow a different model and pattern. I would not take the task too seriously, — as if it were a duty that must be done with absolute regularity, — a page a day, no more, no less, according to Martha's rule!

"Write when it is a pleasure to you: write freely and naturally, as if it were a letter to the girls and mother — put in postscripts as they occur to you. So will you keep in their first freshness your impressions of this very wonderful journey."

The horses are hitched to the wagon. We will have to start at once, and push the horses along smartly if we expect to reach Galena before dark.

CHAPTER V

THE "ANNA-EVE"

WE reached Galena yesterday, and it was not yet so dark but that we could see something of the strange old town. It is built on the face of a slope so steep that the houses seem to be standing one on the top of the other. Long flights of steps connect street with street. The roadways are narrow, so that in many places there is no room for wagons to pass.

In front of Hiram's house all the road slid away down hill into somebody's back-yard, and now the only entrance there is to this house is from the upper street. Hiram turned the dormer window in the roof into a door; so we walk a plank into the attic, and from there make our way down into the living rooms.

From the porch on the south, we look almost straight down upon the wharf, a hundred feet below. All the business houses — the Custom House, the Post-office and the stores — are down there next to the river.

Galena is the most important mining-town of the Northwest. They send their ingots of smelted lead down river, and so to all parts of the world. Hiram says the men who work the lead mines are "the toughest lot ever was," but I think he is just talking. We haven't seen anything of the sort; and we were down at the wharf all last evening, and this morning, too, inspecting the boat that is to carry us down river — the "Anna-Eve" — a boat of Hiram's own building.

He can make anything that he sets his hand to! He, himself, modestly acknowledges that he is "a natural-born tinkerer," but father declares that he is the finest all-round workman there is in this part of the country — carpenter, wagon-smith, blacksmith, and now he has added boatbuilding to his other accomplishments.

When he was down at our house, he told us about this boat, and the extra "fixin's and contraptions" he was going to put in "to make it fitten for the women-folks what was goin' as passengers," but we did not expect to see regular berth-beds, such as they have in steamboats, and glass windows! And besides these he built a cupboard for Anna's dishes, and a stone fireplace! "Anna wouldn't be nowise contented if she didn't have a proper fireplace to cook by, and a cupboard for her things," Hiram says.

Hiram has evidently been learning several lessons from the thrifty Deacon. He has made arrangements with four of his trapper-friends — hunters from the "North-woods" — to take them and their season's catch of furs down to St. Louis; and he will "turn a pretty penny" by the transaction, for they are to give him a percentage of the profits from the sale of their goods for the service.

Perhaps he thought we might not like these strangers as traveling companions; at any rate he explained at some length:

"They ain't the kind that will be a bother. They'll buy their own grub, and 'll cook it themselves, out on the deck, and they'll sleep there; so you women-folks won't see much of 'em; but anyhow they are all of 'em first-rate good fellers, — generous-hearted as they make 'em, too. I got a good right to know 'em for I wintered with 'em one season, trappin' and huntin', and I never seen a whiter lot! — and one of 'em is a nigger, too! He's white as the rest of 'em inside, if his skin is black."

Hiram was in a philosophic mood, for he went on: "Tell you, you find out what a feller is when you're a-campin' with him out in the winter woods — 'special if you're deep in trouble all the time like we was that time.

"Trappin' is a gamble. Sometimes you hits it,

and again you don't! We never made 'nough to pay for the salt we et! The Indians done robbed our traps regler, spite of all we could do. But it wa'n't like that this season. You oughter see the stuff they brought in! Five hundred bale, the finest kind of skins. It's down there under deck, all we can well carry — six thousand dollars' worth as I figger it, — and I gets a percent!

"It's a dum shame that sech a pile of money as they'll handle 'll do 'em no good. They won't never save a single cent of it. None of them trapper boys expects to get out of St. Louis with money in his pockets! It jest slips through their fingers like water, and when it's gone, they turns them round about and gets along back up-river, to their huntin'-ground again. It's plum wicked, not to say downright foolish! I'd be doin' 'em a mercy if I was to drag 'em off to Santa Fé with us, so's they couldn't spend everything they get on foolishment!"

These friends of Hiram's are picturesque looking people. Two of them are Frenchmen, Auguste and Franchy Boissiere; and always with them is the negro boy, Joe-Lu; Rob McLeod is a Scotchman, — six feet four in height, and four feet six around; or at least that is what Hiram says!

They are garbed in true North-woods style — moccasins, and deerskin shirts that hang down

outside their nether garments, almost to their knees. On their heads they are still wearing, though it is near summer-time, fine beaver-skin caps, with broad tails flapping at the back. And they carry, each one, a skinning-knife, tomahawk, whetstone, bullet-pouch, powderhorn, pipe-holder, and a pair of pistols — all this besides the long rifle, their very special pet and pride!

Since we came West father has entertained many strange guests, but I had never before seen real North-woods trappers decked out in their full hunting regalia. They were the observed of all observers on the wharf! From the windows of the boat's cabin we watched them as they stood there, bandying jests with the crew of the "Blue-Bird," the big steamboat that was anchored near to the "Anna-Eve." They shouted to Hiram and came aboard. With all that superfluity of warlike equipment they were cowards, every one, for when they passed the corner of the cabin and came face to face with Anna and me, they wheeled in their tracks, jumped the gang-plank, and scurried to cover, as if they had never before set eyes on women-folks.

This timidity did not last long, however. This morning they boldly boarded ship and managed to go through the ordeal of formal introduction. They helped us as we hung the curtains at the windows,

and put the dishes in the cupboard, and arranged John's books on the shelf above his bed. Anna was making ready to scrub the floor, but big Rob insisted that that duty should be left to him. "Dinna fash yoursel' aboot the scrubbin', whatever! Thot's a mon's work." And he began to throw the water about so recklessly that we retired hastily, not staying to argue the point with him.

While he splashed and scrubbed we sat out at the front of the boat, looking at the city nestled against the hills, at the rushing wave-roughened river, at the men who were loading the "Blue-Bird" with stacks of lead bars.

They kept piling the heavy bars higher and higher and we were sure they were overloading the boat, for the water was even then almost awash her lower deck. Then we heard Franchy speaking excitedly.

"Sure dat Cap'n be a fool to load 'er down lak dat! Catch a snag an' down she go lak a shot! Me, — I not fool 'nough to go wid no such fool Cap'n! Dis 'Anna-Eve' she good 'nough boat for me! Planty queeck, planty safe! She float lak a duck, — make dat St. Louis levee in a week, or may be in tree four days, if we be mind to run 'er at night! Dis full of de moon, jus' same lak day, so we no need to tie up to shore, not less we want to. Yaas, four day, anyhow, we make St. Louis! Dat ol'

Mississip', she be up a-boomin', you bet! De current dat swif' an' strong, carry us down stream lak we 'ave de steam engine! Planty queeck, yaas!"

Father is helping Hiram put in the last finishing touches to the rudder. Father used to have two schooners that carried the slate from his quarries on Seneca Lake across to Buffalo, so he knows what a boat should be, and he thinks the "Anna-Eve" a very superior vessel, built on good lines, and stanch and strong. It is so convenient and comfortable it is a pity we cannot make all of the river journey on her, without changing. That is, of course, impossible, as having no engines she can only go down river with the current. From St. Louis up the Missouri to Independence, we will have to take passage on one of the regular packet-boats.

The "Anna-Eve" will be disposed of in St. Louis.

"They's always buyers for a boat like her, and I do 'low that I'll put a good five hunderd dollars in my jeans from the sale of her — and maybe more'n that!"

Hiram was not enlarging on the truth when he said the miners here were a tough lot. To-night a crowd of them — shouting drunk, and mad for mischief — shouldered their way down through the crowd gathered around the "Blue-Bird." The boat

was about ready to put off from shore, and the gang-plank was filled with people coming and going. The drunken rowdies seized on the plank and jerked it loose, and men and women and children were thrown into the stream. The water was shallow and no one was injured — except a certain Mr. Breunner who suffered from a broken arm. While he was in the doctor's office having it attended to, what did the Captain of the "Blue-Bird" do but steam away down river, and leave him?

This is the news that Hiram came rushing up to tell us only about an hour ago. We have something of a personal interest in the affair, for Hiram has agreed to take this Mr. Breunner with us on the "Anna-Eve," down as far as Alton. He had hoped to meet a friend there — a German Baron — Hiram could not remember the foreign name — but if he is not there by Sunday or Monday he will be too late: and there is not another passenger steamboat going down for a week! It looked quite hopeless for Mr. Breunner's plans till the doctor thought of the "Anna-Eve": and it was through him that the arrangement was finally made. It is all greatly to Hiram's liking, though it hurries us more than is quite convenient.

"We'll have to make our start right away — before midnight — so's to get the man into Alton

in time to see the one that's a-waitin' for him there. That's what I promised him I'd do. He's to give me a hunderd dollars; it's that important to him. And that hunderd dollars is that good to me that I'm goin' to do it or bust a ham-string a-tryin'! The boys say we can make it all right if we ain't too slow gettin' started."

Anna is as nearly vexed as she knows how to be! No one could be kinder, or more generously disposed than she. It is a pleasure to her to be obliging and helpful; but this new guest thrust so unexpectedly upon her hospitality is no ordinary person, and she fears that her plain way of cooking will not suit him.

"You know we haven't the niceties and conveniences that he has been used to; and will you tell me, Hiram Hubbard, whatever are we going to do about sleeping him, on that boat?"

She was looking over her mother's best linens, taking out towels, and sheets and pillow-cases; but Hiram put a stop to that!

"They ain't nothin' needed for him better'n what we got for ourselves! And he in particular specified that he was to sleep out o' doors, on deck, same as the rest of us men; and you can go and put your ma's sheets and fixin's right back where you got 'em! He's consider'ble well up in the world, I reckon, but that ain't sayin' that he'll be fussy

and a trouble! The landlord up to the Galena House said he never seen anyone more agreeable and easier satisfied.

"They're all right int'rested in him down to the ho-tel. They been noticin' the mail he gets, and it's addressed with a 'Prof.' before his name and a slue of letters after it, 's long's the moral law — A.B.C. and I don't know what all! I don't reckon he'll be a mite of trouble — 'ceptin' as you'll have to cook for one more; and if he ain't 'greeable to the vittles you puts on the table, why I'll turn the boat's nose in to shore, and we'll put him off to stay!"

But for all of Mr. Hiram's independent talk, I noticed that when Anna's mother handed him some of her best blankets and towels he took them without a protest!

The boat will not go for an hour yet; but Anna is sitting out on the south porch with her shawl and nubia on, and her blue veil on her arm, waiting for the conch-shell signal to sound.

I wish father were here. There are a dozen messages I want to send back to mother and Martha and the other girls. And I want to feel father's hand on my head, — and hear him say, "I will miss you, my daughter." It is not easy——

CHAPTER VI

RIVER DREAMS

IT seems a week ago since our boat slipped from its mooring place at the Galena wharf, but Anna insists that it was only two days ago — and if that is true, to-day is Friday!

That first morning on board was a busy one — taking out from our chests the things we will need every day, and finding places for them. But since then, for John and me, the hours have been passed in idleness. A dazzling shimmering veil seems to have been dropped between us and those last days of hurry and anxiety.

The boat has not once turned in to the bank, nor have we spoken to anyone outside our boat till to-night, when we floated close in shore to have a nearer view of Burlington. It was just at candle-lighting time, and the circle of hills blossomed out with a thousand tiny points of brightness, and in the same instant the river was all a-twinkle with their tremulous reflections.

Big Rob lighted a row of pitch-pine torches out on deck, and (as if that were a sign and invitation to be

neighborly) a skiff darted out from the line of boats that lined the river bank, and soon drew up alongside.

The rowers were of the better class of rivermen, and they brought us information that our boys were very glad to receive. They said that the "Molly Pitcher" had just pulled in from down river, and her Captain had told them of a number of "cut-offs" that the river has made, in the last few days.

"If you dare to take them, you will save yourself many a long mile," they said.

Auguste was quick with his reply.

"Dare? For w'y we no dare? We raised on dis ol' Mississip'. We know 'er, w'en she in full flood, an' w'en she mos' dry, lak creek! Know 'er lak a book, an' better'n we know our spellin'-book. Yaas, you may believe me dat! We not afraid of any new channel. Sure, we try dem! Where you say? Nauvoo? an' de Half-Moon Bend? Yaas we run dem cut-offs tree year ago w'en de river she be up. Yaas, dat good job dat you tell us. You take one leetle drink fo' de 'good-luck,' eh? Yaas, an' de same to you!"

They drank together, and the men made haste to go, for it was a long stiff pull against the strong current up to Burlington.

Anna and I went out on deck to call after them a friendly good-bye, and we saw the dark blot of the

little craft merge itself in the darker shadows of the big boats along the shore. Then we came in and fanned the dying coals to a bright blaze, and lighted our candles and settled ourselves to our evening's tasks. I took out my book and brought my pen to a point, while Anna unrolled her quilt-pieces. It is a Rising-Sun bedquilt that she is making, and there is an immense amount of work in it, — seven thousand and eighty-six pieces in it, she says, all to be cut to pattern and sewed together. I have lots of patience for lots of things, but none at all for quilt-piecing. Yet this is as pretty as such work can be. The whole table, except the little corner reserved for my book and ink-bottle, is covered with the brightest of calico scraps — crimson, garnet, rose, scarlet, pink, orange, and yellow — gay as a garden of marigolds and poppies.

Anna is the dearest girl, and the loveliest, though she will not believe me when I tell her so. She is so modest and self-depreciatory it is downright provoking. She calls her hair "a red mop," and it is not red. She does it up tight and smooth as ever she can, in a big coil around her head. But sometimes I rob her of all her hairpins, and hide the net that holds the coils in place, and unbraid her hair, and scatter it all about her. It ripples and glows like a cloak of cloth-of-gold. If it were mine a

queen's ransom would not buy it! And she is big and tall and stately as one of Ossian's Celtic princesses — "Moina of the Fair-Locks" — too fine and too lovely to be just Hiram's wife!

Perhaps I ought not to say that. Hiram is homely and unlettered, but he is good-hearted, kind-hearted, and he adores his wife, and tells her so, though he cannot help teasing her sometimes. It is not so surprising, after all, that Anna should have said yes to him. He has a most eloquently persuasive manner of speech. I remember when we all lived back in York State he used to "talk the warts off" from the boy's hands. It sounds silly to say it, but the warts did go away, as Hiram told them to do! And he used to tell us with a perfectly serious countenance that he could "whistle the birds into his pockets." We believed him, for he showed us the birds to prove it! I think he must have "whistled" Anna into his hand! And she seems entirely satisfied, — and I suppose I ought to be the same. She looks perfectly contented, radiantly happy, and adorably lovely as she sits here in the candle-light, with her shining head bent above her pretty stitchery.

Out on the deck someone is playing — on some strange instrument — the strangest music. Though

it is not loud it is all-pervasive, — compelling in its accent. My pen will try to run irregularly to its rhythm, and Anna's needle is marking time. The flowing melody is, at times, airily tender, penetratingly sweet; and again, in the broken chords there is something that hints of things wild and terrible. Yet the tone is always a muted one, — a whispered suggestion rather than a definite sound. It might be a voice from another world. I cannot tell what it is like! The tone is softer, richer, sweeter, and smoother than the tone of a violin — I do not know and I do not want to ask about it. It is enough just to listen — to listen and to dream.

John is sitting up in his berth reading "The Last of the Mohicans" — one of Mr. Cooper's exciting tales. Last year at home John and George and I read "The Deerslayer" and "The Prairie," — sitting out under the trees, with the spring branch flowing over its white pebbles at our feet. The charm of the scenes the novelist describes will always be a part of our consciousness, as if we had with our own eyes beheld them. To me they are as real as the pictures my eyes are each day resting upon; for this real life seems unreal, and the days are passing as if in a dream.

I lie on a pile of soft deerskins at the very edge

of the boat, where I can lean over, and touch with my finger-tips the cool water as it ripples away from the rudder. Looking down into the translucent brown-shadowed depths I can see dim shapes, gnome-like, mysterious, fascinating! And out across the flood where the sunshine falls, it is all a blur of scintillating diamond-sparkles, tossing and flashing, as the tiny wave-crests rise and fall. Their infinite rhythmic recurrence lulls the senses into quiescence. The kiss of the sun upon the eyelids blinds us so we can no longer distinguish between fact and fancy. It is all too easy to believe that the boat is swinging idly at anchor, and that it is the shore that is in motion,—like a strange and glorious canvas, unrolling itself before our eyes, a wonderful panorama!

Here is a rocky cliff like an ancient castle, battlemented, turreted, richly draped with clinging vines. I dwell upon the picture with delight. Then it passes, and another scene takes its place. A poet's bower — a green tree-sheltered glade, through which a golden foaming streamlet flows. And here, upon a high grassy knoll, quite within arrow-shot, a herd of deer with their fawns quietly grazing. They raise their heads and gaze upon us calmly, showing no sign of fear, as if indeed they were pictured wild things, and our boat were but a painted boat.

A fairy island! Seen through the gray mist of early evening, it is wraith-like, spirit-like. Upon the level greensward stands a circle of tender-foliaged young elm-trees — slim, elegant, graceful, like a group of young maidens, with arms uplifted and finger-tips touching to form a magic play-ring. Filmy wisps of vapor are twining in and out among the branches, like the visible garments of unseen woodland sprites, — whose silvery elfin laughter we may almost expect to hear!

The whole scene is instinct with conscious joyous life. Stars, and trees, and evening mists! They are no dead inert things, they are *alive*, — part of the great miracle of Creation: and who shall say they have not some conscious joy in doing God's bidding — in following the laws He has laid down for their guidance.

The child believes in fairies, — fairies in tree and flower, in star and cloud. The poet believes in such visions also: and we may be sure that child's fancy and poet's vision each fall far short of the real truth, if we could but know it as it is.

The boat is swinging in its course around a rocky islet, to the eastward. The newly risen moon has spilled her cup of silver wine upon the waters, and we are following along the shining track.

On nights like these, when the moon shines bright, and the stars try to rival her in glory — when the murmur of music is in the air, and the odors of Spring come to us upon the breeze — what can one do, but dream of things glorious, mysterious, unknowable?

Only a moment can the dreams last. The thin ether of the upper regions is not ours to breathe! The blue empyrean is not ours to soar in! We have no wings: our flights of fancy are not truly flights but mere upspringings! The dear good common things of this beautiful every-day world pluck at our garments, and bring us back to earth, — where we belong! So it is ever! So it is to-night!

John has laid his book aside, and has drawn his curtains for the night. Hiram is covering down the coals in the fireplace with gray ashes. Someone has carried off my inkstand and sand-box, — and by these signs I know it is bedtime!

CHAPTER VII

THE VIOL D'AMORE

I NEVER once thought of its being Joe-Lu — the Negro boy — who was playing last night. And it was *not* a violin upon which he played, but a strange instrument of his own fashioning, — a beautiful instrument polished and inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl; — bigger than a violin, shaped like an old-time *viol d'amore,* and strung with seven strings. I suppose no one but Joe-Lu could play upon it, but in his hands it is a marvel. Auguste and Franchy think Joe-Lu a "mos' won'erful player," and I agree with them.

"No," Franchy says, "nobody play lak dat Joe-Lu! All de boat on de river 'ave got de feedle, of course, — to mek merry — for de dance — de game — for de singin' wid, — but dey not lak dis feedle w'at Joe-Lu make! I t'ink dat feedle 'mos' play 'imself, it go dat easy w'en Joe-Lu tuck 'im under 'is chin! Yaas! You may believe me! — an' w'en dat bow go *crash!* t'rough dem string, it lif' my feet off'n de groun', an' make my 'eart come up in

my t'roat! Ooee! same lak it was de 'ole orchestra, it dat strong! Sometimes it fonny an' gay, an' sometime so sweet, to mek cry! Ev'ybody on de river say dey no one lak Joe-Lu for de music! An' dey been tellin' us, 'For w'y you no send dat boy back to your France to mek one great musician of 'im? 'E show dem w'at music is! An' 'e mek 'imself rich, an' mek you rich, too, for 'e your property, an' w'at 'e make, it jus' same lak you make it for yourself!' An' Auguste an' me we t'ink we do dat — w'en we get rich! Dat long time off — eh? Yaas!

"Some people call dat boy 'nigger'! Dat mek me mad! For w'y, 'e mos' same lak broder to me, — 'is mammy she nurse us both togedder at 'er breas', w'en I li'l sick boy. I ain't never shame of Joe-Lu, nor of mammy Jule, neider! She fines' nigger-woman in de worl', — tall an' straight lak poplar tree, an' 'er eyes lak coals of fire! Ev'ybody 'fraid of 'er, 'ceptin' only us chillern. Dey call 'er Voodoo, an' conjur! Maybe so! But she lak mother to us, — rock us in 'er ahms an' sing always de same song. We not know w'at dat song mean — de words lak she sing w'en she li'l girl — before de slave men steal 'er — Affican words — but de music it soun' lak love-song — an' we not forget dat song — jus' lak she sing it.

"She sing it, dat night w'en she lay 'erself down on 'er bed to die: an' dat night she tell w'at she nevair tell before, 'bout Joe-Lu. She say w'en dey get 'er on dat slave-ship, an' de ship it come mos' to shore, she skin out'n de li'l window an' drop 'erself in de sea, an' swim an' swim, long time, till she come to swamp — Florida swamp — an' take up wid Injun — Seminole — w'at be Joe-Lu's pappy. Joe-Lu got no right to be slave 'tall for 'is pappy was no slave, nor 'is mammy neider, till de hunters catch 'er an' sell 'er to my fader. Den Joe-Lu was born, an' me born, too, — an' she nurse us both, me firs' an' den Joe-Lu, mos' lak we be twins!"

Both Auguste and Franchy love the boy Joe-Lu, and trust him fully, but I cannot conquer a little spasm of fear as I look upon him. I seem to see something cruel, untamed, and dangerous, beneath that impassive exterior. I suppose it is because I have been told of the Indian blood that is in him, and the wilder strain that comes from his Voodoo, "conjur" mammy.

It is the deference that men pay to genius, that accounts for the way Joe-Lu is treated. He is never called upon to perform any heavy tasks. He helps with the handling of the boat, but otherwise his time is his own. It is not he who does the daily drudgery! Auguste and Rob take turns with their

simple cookery, and it is always big Rob who keeps the deck scrubbed and in order.

The four men eat their meals out on the forward deck, sitting on the planks, in a circle around the "kittle" of meat. They spear out the chunks with their sharp-pointed clasp-knives, which they thrust, in most reckless fashion, half-way down their throats.

They "sop" their "johnny-cake" in the "meat-fryin's," and stuff it into their already overfull mouths, and swallow it all in one great gulp! They make a "molasses-pudden" of corn-bread stirred thick in boiling-hot molasses. If they put in a handful of raisins that makes it "plum-pudden"! Having these dainties and a quart cup full of black much-boiled coffee, they have supped like kings — and truly kings might envy them their appetites! Rude manners? Yes, but rudeness like that does not necessarily indicate coarseness of nature! They mean to be punctiliously polite. They always doff their caps, when Anna and I speak to them, and they carefully refrain from boisterous talk, if we are within hearing.

It is the finest compliment to our German "professor-man," Mr. Ernst Breunner, that they have taken him into their confidence as they have. They do not seem to recognize that there is any difference between him and Himey; which is as it should be.

In their eyes he is simply a true manly man, heartily interested in all that is going on around him. He listens as they relate incidents of life in the big woods of the North, and in the French Settlements, down along the Mississippi; and in his turn he tells of his experiences in the Black Forest of the Rhine, and in our own Catskill Mountains and in the Huron lake region.

Two years ago Mr. Breunner accepted a professorship in Harvard College, and since that time he has spent all of his vacation-time out-of-doors, studying the mineral resources of our country, and its fossils and plant-life, all for the use of the University in Germany where he used to be a student — the University of Göttingen. This friend of his — the Baron Friedrich Ehrlich von Munsterberg — whom he expects to meet in Alton, is one of the "Professoren" of Göttingen, and he is expecting to take back with him to Germany Mr. Breunner's book of notes.

"And now he can't," John told me, "because of his broken arm. There is a lot of writing to be done on it yet — and he can't hold a pen! I told him about you, — that you are used to writing for father, and from dictation, and that you would be glad as anything to do that little for him. Of course he says he doesn't want to trouble you, but if you offer to do it, he won't say no."

I was really pleased that I could be of service to "the professor." His drawings were made, and it was only necessary to write out a very few pages of description, and I had no difficulty in this. When he saw that I was interested in the work, he showed me several of his beautifully kept note-books. The sketches of scenery that were scattered through the pages were exquisite things — simply drawn, without unnecessary lines, but marvelously effective! They are somehow suggestive of light, and atmosphere, and distance — like the etchings done by the old Dutch and French artists, that I saw in Mr. Jarvis' collection when we were East last year. It seemed to me then that there was something almost uncanny in it, that a few scratchy black lines on white paper could so represent to our minds such different things,—shining sun, shimmering pools, and the dark tempestuous moods of earth and sky. There *is* something uncanny in it — there is genius in it, and *genius is uncanny*, whether it be genius of musician, of poet, or of artist.

Mr. Breunner told us that his father, and all his father's people, had been artists by profession, for many generations.

"I never knew the time when I could not draw. It is quite as easy to learn to draw the true outlines of what you see before you as it is to learn to write,

— indeed, it should be much easier. The drawing of pictures is the natural method of recording impressions: you see an object, you notice its shape, you put that shape upon paper — what could be easier? Writing is an altogether artificial proceeding. Certain arbitrary forms — letters — are combined in certain arbitrary sequences to make the written word, which we learn to associate with the spoken word. A difficult, complicated, artificial process."

It sounds reasonable as he explains it, and it seems as if any one with eyes ought to be able to put the shape of things on paper. If one only could how it would save long pages of description! I think that I will try to make a picture of the "Anna-Eve." I do not want to leave the pretty boat without having something that looks a little bit like it — just by way of remembrance.

John just called to me to come out on deck, to see the big racers. Two steamboats were coming up-river — the "Elvira" and the "Indian Belle." Their decks were crowded with excited passengers, — screaming and shouting as first one and then the other boat seemed to gain some little advantage. It is a notable race, — best three trips out of five from St. Louis to Rock Island, the winner to have

the right to wear the splendid pair of gilded elk-horns which the "Elvira" is now so proudly displaying at the crest of her pilot-house. It was Auguste who gave me these particulars.

"De 'Elvira' carry dose horn for two season already, but dis time she lose dem! Dat Cap'n Orton of de 'Belle,' 'e will snatch de 'Elvira' bald-'eaded! 'E get dose horn, dis trip! Smartes' Cap'n on de river! 'E make de two out of de five already, an' 'e'll make it t'ree! Ooee! See dat black smoke out of de 'Belle's' smokestack! Dey a-shovin' de rosin an' pitch-pine into 'er! Bacon, too, I wouldn't wonder! Dat make gr-r-reat fire! 'Ear de people on de 'Belle' a-cheerin'! Look! She jus' jumpin' away from dat blue-belly 'Elvira' — lak a deer, w'en a bullet after it! No! To race — it is not safe! But dey not care, not'in', only so be dey *win!* Dey all be bettin' big on dis race! Yaas! An' cry to put more fire under de biler — an' it a poppin' fit to bust! Dem fellers w'at is on de boat, — if it blow up, w'ere dey be? W'at's de use of winnin' if de boat busts up, an' you on 'er, eh? I *bet* on de 'Belle,' but I not *go* on 'er, till de race is over! But dere be planty fools w'at lak de fon. Da's all right for dem, but not for me!"

The big boats steamed up abreast of us. The throb of the laboring engines was in the air. The

big side-wheels beat the water into flying spray. Great waves rolled shoreward, and the "Anna-Eve" rocked dangerously. The boys in their interest had ventured too near the racing monsters, and had forgotten all about safety. They danced up and down, and gesticulated and screamed encouragement to the crew of the "Belle" — and they almost fell overboard when, from his place in the pilot-house, the pilot waved them a greeting! His condescension so great! They so honored!

To any river-man a pilot is a creature set apart like a royal personage! — so independent, so powerful, so despotic a being is he.

We are making the quickest run on record, for a keel-boat, so all the boys say. It takes constant vigilance to keep out where the current runs strongest, to keep out of swirling eddies, off from treacherous mud-banks, and free from floating drift. There are four men at the oars night and day, but they do not seem to mind the work and the loss of sleep.

They, too, are racing — against time! They have pledged themselves to drop anchor at the Alton wharf on Sunday, and unless there should some accident befall us, they will be able to keep their pledge.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FRAGRANCE OF LOCUST-BLOOM

LAST night we were out on deck till midnight. The swift current was sending us dancing down-stream! The boys were trying a new "cut-off," "right cross-lots of somebody's cornfield, I reckon," Himey said.

The boys scanned every ripple and line of foam, watchful lest they should ground on some ridge, or strike a tearing "sawyer"; and, for all their care, we were almost "hung up" in the tangle of a locust-thicket. The heavy-weighted branches swept across the deck, and we gathered armfuls of the wave-wet blooms.

I thought of the locust-lane at home! I could see it — the purple dusty double track, made by hoofs and wheels, the fresh green strip of untrodden grass in the middle; and on either side of the road, the locust trees with their drooping sprays of blossoms, honey-sweet! And then I remembered that it was Saturday night, and the girls would be, at that very minute, going down the lane, on their

way to the Saturday night Singing-school. They would be breathing the fragrance of locust flowers, and looking up to the same shining golden moon — thinking of John and Deya, just as we were thinking of them.

I sat on the deck, close to John's couch, and I could feel his quick breathing, as he laid his arm around my neck. We were both thinking of home.

Joe-Lu took up his fiddle, and touched the strings lightly with his "feedle-bow." Music — from somewhere far away — answered to that touch. It was like sleepy nestlings calling to each other. Then it came in gayer measures, and, finally, through subtle modulations complicated and perplexing, it swung into the wildest, sweetest melody!

This music is a mystery to me. It seems to follow no law, unless it is a law of its own. Its cadences are strange and bewildering, its accent capricious, its phrases tantalizing, unsatisfying, incomplete.

How can one so rude and uncultured as this poor Joe-Lu have the power to set the heart a-throbbing with emotions so complex, so profound, so subtly exquisite, so almost divine? What does his music mean to him?

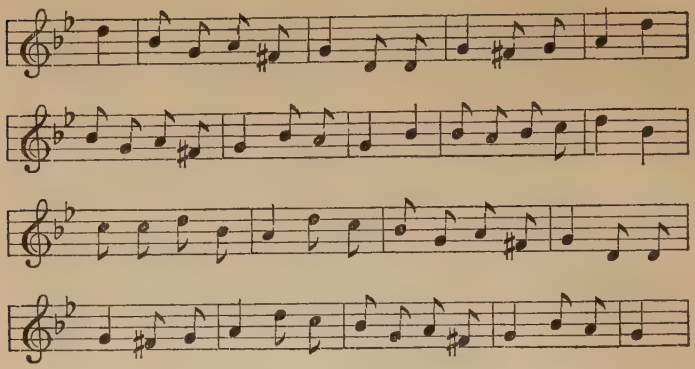
I could but watch him as he stood, without support, on the very edge of the boat — a dark silhouette against the silver-sparkling water. His black-bronze face was as devoid of expression as if it were of bronze indeed. But the hand that held the bow, and the fingers that hovered over the strings, were eloquent; and his whole form yielded itself to the rhythm of the music, as a tree is swayed by the summer wind.

I wondered what aspirations were stirring at his heart — what vague enchantments were dancing before his eyes!

It was a night of more than earthly splendor. The world was drenched in the warm moon-beams; and John and I, and Anna were content to sit and dream. But Hiram had no notion of allowing anybody to indulge in moonlight reveries. He would rather make it a time of moonlight revelry!

He and big Rob were singing, turn and turn about, all the quaint old songs they knew — "Barbara Allen" and "Lord Lovel" and "Black-eyed Susan," and "I'll hang my harp on a willow-tree."

Rob roared out the verses of "Captain Kidd" — and the chilly little creeps went up and down my spine as he sang.



"My parents taught me well, as I sailed, as I sailed,
To shun the gates of hell, as I sailed.
I cursed my father dear, and her that did me bear,
And so wickedly did swear, as I sailed, as I sailed,
And so wickedly did swear, as I sailed.

"I'd a Bible in my hand, when I sailed, when I sailed,
But I sunk it in the sand as I sailed.
I made a solemn vow, to God I would not bow,
Nor myself one prayer allow, when I sailed, when I sailed,
Nor myself one prayer allow, when I sailed.

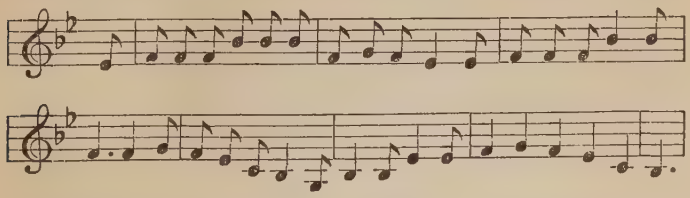
"I murdered William Moore as I sailed, as I sailed.
And left him in his gore as I sailed.
And being cruel still, my gunner I did kill,
And much precious blood did spill, as I sailed, as I sailed,
And much precious blood did spill as I sailed.

"My name was Robert Kidd as I sailed, as I sailed,
My name was Robert Kidd, as I sailed.
My name was Robert Kidd, God's laws I did forbid,
And so wickedly I did, as I sailed, as I sailed,
And so wickedly I did, as I sailed!"

Auguste sang in French — one of the popular songs of the "voyageurs" — something about how a man changes his sweetheart with every Springtime — "Tout les printemps."

"Qu'ils changent qui voudront,
Pour moi je garde la mienne."

Hiram's contribution to the evening's concert was the ancient ballad — the supposedly tragic ballad — of "The Brown Girl and Fair Eleanor." This song has "been in Hiram's family" for many generations, — passed down, from mother to daughter, and from father to son. "And I reckon it wa'n't never printed." There were thirty-seven verses, as Hiram sang it, and he thinks that he has forgotten some! It is a real three-volume novel set to music!



"'O mother, dear mother, come read my riddle, ere ever the sun goes down,
O, shall I marry Fair Eleanor, or bring the Brown Girl home?'

"'The Brown Girl, she has house and lands, Fair Eleanor, she has none,
Therefore I advise you as your best friend, to bring the Brown Girl home.'

"He rode till he came to Fair Eleanor's hall, to invite her to his wedding.
There was none so ready as Fair Eleanor was to rise and let him in.

"She dressed herself in scarlet and gold, her waiting-maids in green,
And every city that they passed through, they took her to be the queen.

"She rode till she came to Lord Thomas' hall, she rapped so loud it did ring,
There was none so ready as Lord Thomas was, to rise and let her in.

"He took her by her lily-white hand and led her across the hall,
And he seated her at the head of the table, among the gentles all.

"'Lord Thomas,' says she, 'is this your bride? She is so very brown.
And you might have had as fair a lady, as ever the sun shone on.'

"The Brown Girl had a little knife, with a blade so keen and sharp,
And she pierced Fair Eleanor through, and she pierced Fair Eleanor's heart.

"'Fair Eleanor, why do you sigh, why is your cheek so wan?
Thou art my own, my one true love, the fairest the sun shines on.'

"'Lord Thomas,' said she, 'it's are you blind, or can't you very well see?
It is my own, my own heart's blood, a-trickling down to my knee!'

"He took the Brown Girl by the hand and led her across the hall,
And with a broad sword cut her head off, and flung it against the wall.

"Then he put the handle against the wall, the point against his breast.
Said he, 'Here's the death of three true lovers, a-lying down to rest.

"'O mother, dear mother, go dig my grave, and dig it both wide and deep;
And put Fair Eleanor in my arms and the Brown Girl at my feet.'

"And out of her heart there sprung a rose, and out of his a brier;
And they grew and twined in a true-love knot, which lovers always admire."

I have promised to write out all of the thirty-seven verses for Mr. Breunner. He is interested in the poem as a literary curiosity. Many of these old-time ballads are much older than the art of printing. They are the imperfectly transmitted fragments of the romance-songs, sung by troubadours and minstrels, in kings' courts, in the days of the Long-ago! They are quite as well worth preserving — so Mr. Breunner says — as the Nibelungenlied, or the old Norse Sagas, inasmuch as they give a more or less true picture of life as it was in the olden times.

This song of "Fair Eleanor and the Brown Girl" lends itself easily to burlesque, and as Hiram sang

it in a fine high falsetto, it was irresistibly funny. We laughed and laughed, till the echoes all laughed with us.

And then I thought I heard another laugh that was not an echo. It seemed to come from somewhere out on the river, but I only heard it once, and I could not tell for sure. Later we were all singing, "Farewell, farewell to thee, Araby's daughter!" when a flute-like tenor voice — a stranger's voice, from somewhere — took up the melody, and sang the song with us, measure for measure, word for word!

It was deliciously mysterious! There were so many tricksy echoes abroad, we could not tell where the singer might be; and he must have been right near us, on one of the little half-submerged islands left in the middle of the river. For after we had floated a long ways down-stream we looked back and saw the red glow of a campfire, and the blaze flared up high for an instant, and then it was gone.

CHAPTER IX

HIRAM'S BILL OF SALE

IT is not nearly so easy as one might think, to draw a picture. I have been working on a sketch of the "Anna-Eve" for hours, rubbing out the lines as fast as I made them, — and now it is not at all satisfactory. I could only put down a few lines, as we stood on the bluff at Alton, — and I have had to finish it as best I could here in the house, working on this rickety little table, with only the big roses of the wall-paper to remind me of what the out-of-doors ought to be!

I wish I could somehow express the force and might of the great river sweeping by, — the gentle beauty of the distant wooded banks, — the brightness of the azure sky. It is not a picture, as Mr. Breunner's sketches are; but after all it means something to me, — it will serve to recall the real scene, — it will keep memory's picture from fading out of my mind.

I have been looking back through the pages of this Journal. It would seem that I had bestowed

an immense amount of time upon it, but I haven't. It is a pleasure to me to sit with the book before me, and think over what has transpired, while the words trip over themselves in their hurry to put themselves on paper! I think it must be that it is because my ink is so good — it flows so freely from the pen.

For years, ever since she left Dixon, Cousin Elinor and I have kept up a voluminous correspondence. Father has always been a little amused by it, and Martha wonders how we find so much to say to each other. And now I am just making believe that this is a "to-be-continued" letter to Cousin Elinor, — and I know she will think that she will have to read it all, when she comes down to see us at Thanksgiving time. So, Cousin Elinor, I will take up the narrative, where I left it, — when we were just above Alton.

We reached that city on Sunday afternoon, and anchored in a little cove under Prospect Hill. Though Mr. Breunner was in haste to go up into the city, he did not forget to bid each one of us adieu, in his nice polite formal foreign fashion. He took my hand lightly in his and raised it to his lips. In his gaze, as his eyes met mine, was something serious and earnest, — something deep and strange. I can-

not express what I mean; only I felt that we had not understood him as we should have done.

Auguste and Franchy and Joe-Lu were born in Alton, and lived there till they were seven or eight years old; and, as was natural enough, they were anxious to spend a few hours there, before we went on down to St. Louis. Auguste insisted that "de ladies mus' be tired of dat boat, not get off her for four days — dey be mighty glad to set deir foot on shore! Yaas! W'y no we 'ave de picnic-supper up on de top of dose bluff? Dat be fine? Eh?"

As an extra inducement they offered to show us a "mos' won'erful picture — de picture of de 'Piasa-Bird' — painted up high on de bluff! Ev'ybody on de Mississip' know 'bout dat picture, — so ol' dat de ol'est Injun not 'ave de tradition 'ow it come to be dere — so dey say 'Thunder-God' paint 'im dere! De Medicine-man 'e tell 'em dat dat Piasa-Bird carry off two Miami warrior," — Auguste lowered his voice to a tragic whisper, — "yaas, and eat 'em! Dat ve'y picture did dat! Mighty ol' picture! Pere Marquette, w'en 'e firs' come down de Mississip', 'e see it, an' say it mos' won'erful! I want for to see dat Piasa-Bird again, myself! Our fader an' moder dey live over on dat Piasa-street, — an' Franchy an' Joe-Lu an' me one time we t'ink we be so brave an' smart! We run away

an' come up on de hill an' t'row stone, an' shoot arrow at dat Piasa-Bird! I tell you, for sure, dat picture roll 'is eyes at us, an' stick out 'is red tongue! We t'ink 'e did, anyhow, an' we skeer mos' to death, an' skoot for 'ome, — an' be good for mos' a month! Eh, Franchy?"

So, in order to satisfy the boys, when the boat came to anchor above the Alton wharf, Auguste and Hiram and I clambered up the steep bluff. It was with something like real awe in his manner that Auguste pointed out the Piasa-Bird to us. In days gone by it must have seemed a terrible apparition to the superstitious savages.

It is a nondescript creature, with outspread wings, a scaly tail, head and horns of a goat, a man's distorted face, fiery eyes, and a mouth dropping gouts of blood. But all this is to be only dimly seen, for its outlines are blurred, and the once bright colors are faded by the suns and rains of uncounted seasons. Yet its colossal size, the inaccessibility of the place where it is found, the mystery of its origin, all combine to make it an impressive object still.

My imagination played me no tricks. I did not think it rolled its age-dimmed eyes at me, but I was ready to "skoot" for the boat, when Auguste gave the word. And Anna and I made ready the "picnic-supper," which Hiram carried up the hill. As if it

were only a foolish bit of play, Franchy and Joe-Lu made a "queen's chair" with their clasped hands, and they made John let them carry him up the steepest part of the slope.

We had not thought of the irksomeness of our cramped quarters on the boat till we stood on the heights, and felt the fresh breeze blowing, and looked out across the shining river with its tree-clad shores.

I had only just begun my picture of the boat when Anna called me to come to supper. And we idled away the time, till the church-bells were ringing, when we went down into the city.

Everyone was out enjoying the beautiful May evening. Church-people were on their way to evening meeting, and others were gathered in festive groups on the street-corners, — the girls dressed in gayest attire, each one trying to outdo the others in the bigness of her bonnet, the breadth of her hoop-skirt, and the quantity of flowers and jewelry with which she was bedecked. Anna and I were almost ashamed of our plain costumes. It was at Anna's suggestion that we turned into one of the quieter streets, but here we were jostled by a crowd of rough men, who were shouting and swearing, and and we saw one of them turn back to *spit upon the pavement!* It was the pavement stained by the blood of Lovejoy! In a hushed voice Auguste told me:

"Yaas, dat is w'ere Lovejoy was keel! De mob shoot 'im down, — right on dat ve'y place! 'E publish Abolition paper. 'E not stop for no one's say so! An' de mob come! I seen 'em! I 'eard de guns — seen 'im t'row up 'is ahms, an' twis' 'isself roun', an' drap to de groun'! An' dat hell-crowd wipe de blood wid deir 'ankerchief an' shout, an' go way laughin'! I not Abolition, but I say, w'atever, dat mos' wicked act!"

I glanced quickly around. In the dusk, the whole dreadful scene seemed to re-enact itself before my eyes. I think Anna felt something of the same terror, for she seized my hand and made me run with her down to the boat.

Big Rob knew of this boarding-place, here in St. Louis, and he escorted us as far as the front door, and beat a hasty retreat. He was anxious to be down on the levee with Hiram, and John would go too.

Anna and I spent the day indoors, — she busy, as usual, with her needle, and I with my pen. We did not expect to see the men till supper-time, there was so much for them to do, — Hiram's boat to dispose of, tickets to buy for the Missouri-river trip; and our trapper friends would have to find a market for their furs.

It was eight o'clock when they came trooping up

the stairs, in the gayest of spirits, — but I noticed that it was Auguste and Franchy and Rob who were doing all the talking! Hiram was not saying anything!

"Sure we got de bes' of news! Sold dem bale of fur, all for de top-notch price, — an' dey mighty glad to get 'em, seem lak! Dose silver-fox — dat w'at take François Chouteau's eye! — an' dem beaver skin, — sof' as silk, 'e say! Dat was beeg pile of money 'e count out to us! Too beeg to trow away, you bet! W'at you say, Miss Hubbard, if we go in partners wid dat 'usband of yours? Yaas! Dat 'ard-fisted ol' miser dere, dat Himey! We go in togedder an' all buy goods for de trade wid Santa Fé! Dat be one fine scheme, eh? Firs' time we ever get out of St. Louis wid ten dollars! Now Himey, 'e keep de money in 'is jeans, — not let us look at it till we get miles away from dis city. 'E keep it safe, yaas! Only 'e be not so smart 'bout 'is own business! W'at you say? We t'ink dat 'e done *give* 'is boat away! Yaas, done *give* it to a stranger-man, w'at 'e nevair see before!"

Hiram really looked shame-faced and a little anxious as he explained the transaction.

"There was a good-natured green-lookin' chap down by the wharf thet wanted the boat, and he offered me nine hunderd dollars for her. Thinks I,

that's a pretty good profit on what she cost me, countin' my time and all, but when it come to payin' he hadn't no money, but only a lot of cow-critters and such down by Sibley, clost to Westport and Independence, on his brother's farm! I looked him over pretty keen, and I sized him up to be an honest feller, and so, says I, 'I'll resk it,' and we made out a good strong bill of sale." Hiram spread out the document upon the table, and followed the words with his finger as he read. "'Forty head of oxens and cow-critters, more or less, being all the stock now owned by said Ury Dowton, and held by his brother, said Oty Dowton, on his farm near Sibley, Missouri.'

"That feller was too green-lookin' to be anything else than honest. Don't you think your Uncle Fuller don't know an honest feller when he sees him? If that Ury Dowton turns out to be a cheat and a rogue, I'll eat the cat!

"The trade ain't a fair one, but it ain't me that's got the wust of it! As I figgers it, them cow-critters is worth full nine hunderd and half as much again! But it was him that made the offer, and I wa'n't gooney enough to hang back and say no!"

The boys jeered and laughed.

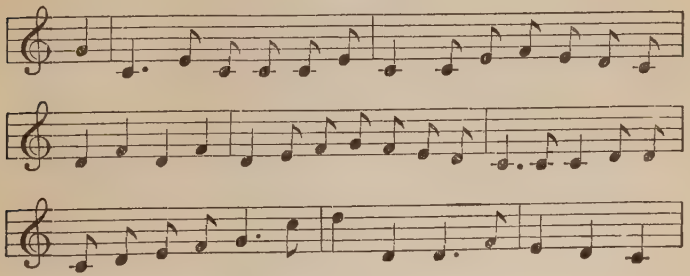
"Yaas! But w'at if, w'en you get to Sibley, you fine dere is no broder! No farm, no oxens, no not'ing, but dat bill of sale in your pocket? Dat

be awful fonny! Eh? Yaas! We say dat be one fine trade!"

Though they are bound to have their fun with Hiram, I know they think it is all right! Hiram is too keen to be easily fooled!

There is a concert down-stairs this evening, our landlady's lovely daughter being the performer. She has been in and out of our rooms all day, looking over my shoulder while I was trying to sketch, and begging quilt pieces from Anna. She invited us down to see and hear her new melodeon. I have been wild to run my fingers over its keys, but Anna did not care to go down.

The doors are open so we can hear her sing — of course she knows that we are enjoying the song — such a very appropriate one!



"I'll chase the antelope over the plain;
The tiger's cub I'll bind with a chain;
And the wild gazelle, with its silvery feet,
I'll give to thee for a playmate sweet!"

By one of the papers that Hiram brought in, I see that Charles Dickens, the English novelist, he who wrote so touchingly of Little Nell, has only lately left St. Louis — having been here for the purpose of studying our country. I wish, I *wish*, I could have seen him! That would have been something to remember, forever!

CHAPTER X

THE EXPLOSION, AND A "BOWER-DANCE"

THERE will be no danger of monotony in this journey, if all continues as it has begun. Here, where we have not yet even touched the threshold of the great prairie country, we are brought face to face with romance, excitement, and adventure.

As we stepped aboard the "Oceana" at St. Louis, we followed right in the wake of a wedding-party! The bride still wore her white veil, and all her wedding finery. The bridegroom is evidently fearful that the tender little creature who has been entrusted to his care may be suddenly snatched from him, for he keeps her safe within the shelter of his strong right arm, every blessed minute! The passengers call them the turtle-doves — and when we saw his name written in the clerk's book we found it really *was* "Dove," although she calls him *darling!*

But these passengers are of little consequence compared with one notable we have on board — the

great Kit Carson himself! And besides Kit Carson, we have the Fremont Exploring Expedition, with Lieutenant Fremont in command.

Kit Carson is the hero of the hour. Everyone knows of him. Everyone is sounding his praises. He does not look at all as I thought he would. It is natural that one should picture a scout and Indian-fighter as big and rough and coarse, and Mr. Carson is just the opposite of this. His well-knit frame is slight and graceful. He is so modest and quiet-spoken one might be excused for thinking him youthful, inexperienced, and all unused to the hardships of life. It is only by degrees that one comes to realize that he is a man of exceptional strength and exceptional force of character.

There are many stories going about, concerning his exploits, — of the bands of desperadoes he has followed up and taken prisoner, and of the scores of Indians he has slaughtered! I do not like to think of these things. I am perfectly sure that he is not cruel in his nature, and I know that if he has slaughtered human beings and Indians, it is because he has been forced to do so by the exigencies of warfare.

Though he is known as the "Terror of the Plains," the Indians do not all fear and hate him, as was shown, plainly enough, to-day. Four Indian braves, with their squaws, were plodding along the swampy

bank, all dripping with mud and water and shivering with the cold, and as we passed, they saw Carson and called to him with every evidence of friendliness. In their sign-language they made him understand that their boat had sunk under them, snagged by a ripping sawyer, a little ways down the river, and that they were going to walk all the way to Hermann, twenty miles or more.

Carson persuaded Captain Miller to stop the "Oceana," and take the poor half-drowned creatures on board. They were not effusive in expressing their thanks, Kit Carson being the only one among us these kings of the ancient soil would deign to notice. The big braves wrapped their blankets tightly around them, and sat themselves down on the hurricane-deck — a row of particularly expressionless mummies they seemed to be! The squaws went down to the engine-room to dry and warm themselves. One of them had such a pretty pappoose, and John was trying to get it to notice him, and went with them down the stairs. Just after they had disappeared, we felt a shock all through the boat, and heard a muffled "boom!" A cloud of steam immediately came rolling up from below, and my first thought was that John was down there, in the scalding steam!

I dropped down those stairs at a single bound, —

and there was John, with the little Indian baby in his arms, and John was smiling at my anxious face, and no one was hurt! There wasn't anything so very much the matter, the engineer said, only something-or-other had blown out of the boiler-head, and had done no harm.

The engineer was explaining to one of the crew that he could "fix her, good as ever, in half-an-hour," when there was a sudden commotion up on deck. Some of the passengers had gone crazy with fright, and in a crowd were rushing to one side of the vessel. The boat seemed about to turn turtle and go down!

That engineer went into a raving fury, and began swearing in the wickedest way! "Them panic-struck fools will capsize this boat — they ain't nothing the matter, but they will send us to the bottom. Why don't somebody tell them that the boat is all right?"

He was looking at me as he spoke, and, without ever stopping to think, I sprang up the stairs.

I was in the midst of the crazy, panic-stricken crowd, and I am not sure but that I struck a big man in the face who tried to thrust me aside! I know I screamed at them like a fury and a termagant! "There isn't any danger! The engineer says there isn't any danger! It's all over! He

says so! You are making the boat tip over, your own selves, crowding all to that side! You're crazy, that's what he says! Get back to your places!"

They looked at me, and looked at each other, dazed as if they had just wakened from a nightmare dream — and the panic was over! They came back to their senses, the boat came back to an even keel, and I came down below to hide my shamed face in the state-room.

I thought I never would want to go out to dinner, or face those passengers again! It is most unbecoming for a gentle-bred woman to make herself so conspicuous. I do not see how I could have done it, — but indeed I did not realize what I was saying. I just repeated what the engineer said, — and I suppose I should be thankful I did not repeat all he said! I acted, first — and thought about it afterward.

"Just wouldn't Martha have been properly shocked, though, if she could have seen you?" was my brother John's nice way of consoling me!

There were so many other things happening, however, the people have, I think, almost forgotten the part I had in the excitement.

When the boat made the first lurch to starboard, Mr. Dove, with his bride in his arms, plunged into the water, — an involuntary plunge, I suppose it

was, — but being out of the boat he had no mind to go back to it! Encumbered as he was by the little lady, he was swimming fast and far as he could, and the boatmen whom the Captain sent after them declared that they were not even trying to make the shore. "They was headed for St. Louis, and bound to keep a-going, and we could hardly get them persuaded to come back with us!"

If some of the white folks were frightened foolish, the Indians made up for it by not being frightened at all! Wrapped in their blankets they sat in silence, "and didn't blink an eye" nor make a single move, till the boat turned in at Bates' Wood-yard, where our boat, the "Oceana," is now lying by for repairs. Then they majestically rose and stalked away, and all they said was, "White man make big noise, — big fool, — Indian walk!"

We have been here at the landing for hours — almost a whole day. The accident to our machinery was greater than the engineer had at first supposed, and now Captain Miller has decided to take the boat back to St. Louis.

The "Oceana" looks as fine as the best of the Ohio river boats. She has been newly painted, white-and-gold, both inside and out. There is a red velvet carpet in the Ladies' Cabin, and mahogany furniture, and a grand piano, and a big crystal

chandelier. But her engines are second-class, and second-hand and out of repair, besides! The passengers say it is a wonder that we were not all "blown sky-high."

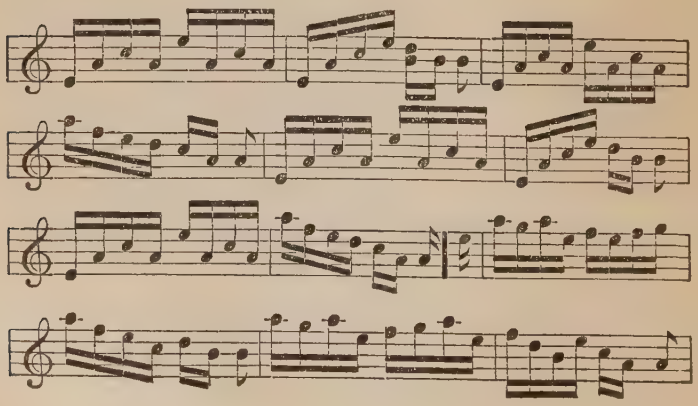
Because nothing dreadful happened, they will not treat the matter seriously, yet it was serious. This steam-power is a dangerous thing. There is not a season that a dozen boats are not blown up in explosions, and hundreds of passengers killed or injured, — yet we are willing to incur the extra risk, because of the saving in time, and because of the comforts and luxuries that are provided.

John says that Kit Carson has his hands full trying to pacify Lieutenant Fremont, who is showing himself restless and uneasy, — impatient that his Expedition is so delayed. Everyone knows that Captain Miller is doing the best he can, under the circumstances. He will wait here, and put us on the first up-river boat that will take us. "And what better can you ask than that?" the clerk says.

The men-passengers are making the best of the situation. They are getting up a "bower-dance" to pass the time away. They have borrowed lumber from the boat's stores to make a dancing-platform, and they have built up over it a bower of young trees, cut down with all their wealth of summer greenery thick upon them.

The "Oceana" has its own string band, and already the fiddlers are scraping with their bows upon the strings. They have struck into the tunes, "Jim-a-long-Josey" and "The Merrie Miner." I have heard Uncle Asaph play them both, "a-many and a-many a time," and perhaps that is why they sound so quaint and sweet to me.

A dozen laughing couples are running down the gang-plank, eager to be first upon the dancing-floor. The white-haired old fiddler is calling off: "Oh, the merrie miner! S'lute your pretty partner! Ladies forrard, men on the outside! All jine hands, and all hands round! Cross, and shake your foot, and cross right back! Swing your gal, and pick her up, and tote her home!"



"A boat in sight, coming up-river!" John and Mr. Carson have been on the lookout. Though it is four miles down-stream, Mr. Carson professes to recognize it as the "Trapper"—one of the American Fur Company's boats — with Pierre Chouteau as Captain.

CHAPTER XI

THE GAMBLERS

THE "Trapper" is a much smaller vessel than the "Oceana," but it is strongly built, and very fast. We may consider ourselves lucky to be aboard her, for while we are racing swiftly up-stream, the rest of the "Oceana's" passengers, including the turtle-doves, are still wearily waiting, down at Bates' Wood-yard.

Our Captain — Captain Pierre Chouteau — would not have burdened his boat with extra passengers, had it not been for the very special interest he feels in the Fremont Expedition. Fremont is to purchase his full traveling outfit from Francis and Cyprian Chouteau, who have a big Trading Post near the mouth of the Kaw; and when Captain Pierre learned that Fremont was detained at the landing, he offered to take him and his party on to their destination, — and Hiram somehow contrived it so that we were taken on board with the others.

Anna and I were making our way through the crowd, when John came hurrying to us, breathless

in his eagerness to tell us a most wonderful piece of news.

"Deya! You can't guess who is on this boat! One of the passengers — and he never knew that we were here, till I found him! You couldn't guess in a week! Do guess, Deya, — you are so slow! It's Mr. Breunner! Our Mr. Breunner! And he is going down into Old Mexico — and maybe he will go with our caravan as far as Santa Fé! The Baron von Munster — whatever it is — at Alton, made the arrangement for him to go, and he thinks it is a great thing!"

All this was tumbling out of John's lips, while "our Mr. Breunner" was making his way to our side.

When we parted with Mr. Breunner at Alton, not expecting to see him again, he seemed almost a stranger, but now, when he came toward us with the light of pleased anticipation in his eyes, we were glad to receive him as an old-time friend.

I was curious to know how it happened that his plans were changed so suddenly. I had understood that he was on his way to the Appalachian country, and now he was going westward instead of east! John's jumbled explanation, however, had to suffice us for the present. Mr. Breunner volunteered nothing further himself.

With Mr. Breunner, as traveling-companion, there is a certain grave and dignified — not to say, morose — individual, a Mr. Harrod, a merchant from Boston. We were presented in due form, but if Mr. Harrod observed us or heard our names, he gave no sign.

I have made up my mind that it will be useless trying to be civil to this severe and cynical-looking gentleman. Dark-faced, forbidding in manner, wrapped in his own gloomy thoughts, his senses seem barred against the pleasant trivialities of every-day life. Poor man! He looks as if he had never smiled in his life, and never expected to do so.

But for all his cold and unapproachable manner he is still a person one cannot help but look at twice, as he paces the deck, gazing over the heads of everyone, speaking to no one.

To-night it was very cold out-of-doors, and the passengers gathered in the cabin to listen to the music and to amuse themselves with card-games. Mr. Harrod was the last to come in, and as he was going to his state-room, Captain Chouteau called to him, asking him to sit in at the game, and moved over to make room for him, but without any recognition of the courtesy, he went to his room and closed the door behind him!

Everyone here plays cards, but not for money! Captain Chouteau will not allow gambling on board his boat, and his word, of course, is law. While he is strict about gambling, he is not so strict in regard to drinking! There is a bar in the forward part of the boat, and late at night the men begin to get very noisy. We hear loud talking, and often scuffling, — and sometimes fighting too. But nothing serious happens, — unless something is happening now! I don't know what it can mean! The boat, I am sure, is turning in to the shore! The men are calling out, and shouting and laughing!

Hiram and Captain Chouteau and big Rob are holding a conference just outside our door — something exciting is surely taking place.

Anna and I just had to find out what it meant! We put on our dresses and shoes, and stepped out into the cabin, and Anna made Hiram believe that it was necessary for her to have her brown carpet-bag, that was down in the baggage-room, right at once! While he was occupied in getting the useless bag, we sat there on the divan, and learned all about what had happened.

While the men in the cabin were playing their games, with innocent counters, three professional gamblers (notorious characters who had slipped

aboard, it seemed, without being recognized) had got hold of one of Fremont's men who was carrying money that belonged to the Expedition, and they had inveigled him into their state-room, and cheated him out of all that he had with him! He was smart enough to play that he was stupidly drunk, and they were foolish enough to let him go, — and he went straight to the Captain with his tale.

The rascals were quarreling over the division of the spoils, when the door suddenly fell in on them, with the Captain and big Rob back of it! They dragged the three down the length of the main cabin, and out on deck, and then dumped them over-board — into the mud and slush of the river!

Up to their knees in mire, the three begged and implored the Captain to let them on board again — they promised him on their word of honor as Southern gentlemen that they would quit gambling for good and all, if the Captain would only be good to them! But the Captain was not to be cajoled.

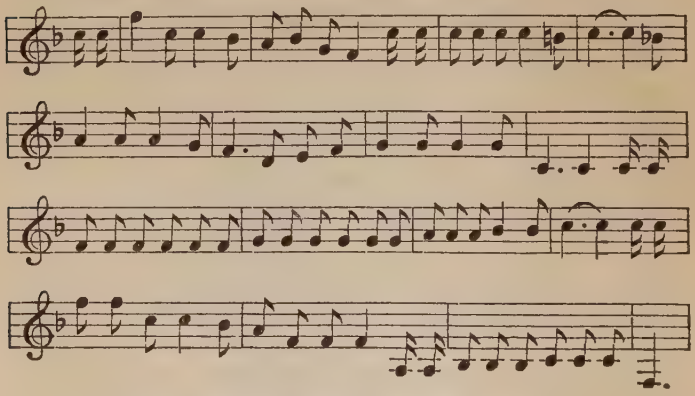
"Dat good Cap'n is not dis Cap'n! I feel not good at you — not whatsoever! Nex' time you remember 'bout dat sign w'at is put up ev'yw'ere on dis boat, *No Gamblin'!* Planty big sign for you to read! Nex' time maybe you t'ink I mean w'at I say!' Yaas an' dey cry, an' dey cry! But dey not so bad off! Dat nice sof' place w'ere dey

light! Dey only have to stay dere till daylight, maybe, an' some boat come, an' pick 'em up. Only dey better stay w'ere dey is, for it be bad swamp all 'roun' dere — dey not dare try to wade out!

"Dey know all de time dat dere be no gamblin' on none of dese Missouri steamboat! Dem gamblers too rackless — too rapscallious! Dey get so bold dat passengers be 'fraid to bring deir money on de boat, — an' dat bad for business! So we jus' pass de word dat de whole gamblin' business got to stop! Dat is good rule for de boat! On de shore — well, dat be different. I, myself, I play wid de bes' of dem, on shore. Dat nobody's business. But not on de boat! We fix dem good if dey try it, — dat is one sure t'ing!" He pounded big Rob on the back. "Dis one bully boy! You seen 'im, eh? 'E lif' dose men, two of dem — one in each han' — lak dey be sick kitten — yaas, by de neck, an' drap 'em over de rail! It was dat easy trick! Dose men make one splurge in de worl', w'en dey strike dat mud-bank! W'at you say? De drinks on me? Yaas, dat all right! Ev'ybody!"

They trooped away to the bar-room, and we took the brown carpet-bag, and retired to our little sleeping room — but not to sleep! There is a crowd of young boys on board, of whom Danny Driscoll and Farrell Montgomery are the leaders. "A passel of

rowdy college youngsters," Himey calls them — and they are parading around and around the cabin, singing, in not unmusical fashion, "Martin Halligan's Aunt" — and they are using the dinner-gong to mark time with! There is no telling when they will be ready to quiet down!



"Here's a health to Martin Halligan's aunt!
And I'll tell you the rason why;
She ates becase she's hungry,
And she drinks becase she's dhry!
If she e'er saw a man stop the course of the can,
Martin Halligan's aunt would cry!
Arrah! fill up the glass, and let the toast pass!
How d'ye know but ye'r neighbor's dhry?"

CHAPTER XII

EACH IN HIS OWN WAY

JOHN has thrown aside his story-book! He doesn't need to be reading the fictitious adventures of imaginary heroes, when Kit Carson is here with us; and though Mr. Carson can hardly be induced to speak of his own exciting experiences himself, there are plenty of others who will. Everyone is talking of him, but he does not seem to be conscious of it.

He keeps John with him for hours at a time.

"He's a fine-spirited lad, and has the makings of a strong fine man," he told me. "You ain't to worry yourself too much because he looks so peaked and delicate-like. This Mizzouri air ain't none too good for him — it's chock-full of malary, and pizen to strangers; but he'll soon be out'n it, out on the high plains, and when you get him there you just turn him loose, to rough it with the other men." (The other *men!*) "Let him sleep on the bare ground, with nothing but his blanket between him and the sky! Let him eat the same fare the others do, and all — and he'll be all right, in no time!"

Indeed, I think that John must have been ready to make the turn for the better, even before we started on this journey — he seems so much improved. Because Mr. Carson sees the vivid interest that John feels in all he says and does, he takes pains to be more than usually friendly and companionable. He has changed his place at the table, so as to be near us. The sublime Fremont, and his corps of officers, naturally have the place of honor at the head of the table, next to the Captain.

The conversation there is not specially enlivening — dignity is an oppressive commodity; and it is to be noticed that the Captain slips away at the first opportunity, and comes down to join in the livelier discussions that seem to belong particularly to the foot of the festive board.

"That Hiram and that bunch of college youngsters do carry on, something scandalous," I heard a soured old dyspeptic complaining in a corner. And it's true, they are noisy, — bubbling over with their witty foolery and nonsense, ready for anything in the way of a practical joke, — as the soured old dyspeptic had found out! His place at the table was right between Danny Driscoll and Twank Evans, and they kept his plate piled with everything rich and tempting, and consequently demoralizing to a distressed stomach! And the old man

ate — and suffered, and then cried out upon those who had put temptation in his way!

It is a decidedly mixed crowd that we have for neighbors. Besides the four college boys, and Hiram and Anna, and Mr. Breunner, and Mr. Harrod, and Kit Carson, there are three Bostonese, and a "man from Maine," and a young Sir Harry Hotspur from Georgia! Political discussions are the order of the day. "Will there be war with Mexico?" "Will the United States annex Texas?" "If so, what then?"

To-day at dinner everybody was talking at once! Wine had been served to some of the men, and that may have made them more inclined to disputation and argument. The young "Hotspur" rose to his feet and proposed a toast to — "The brave Sam Houston — the George Washington of Texas!" The toast was quietly accepted, but it was the beginning of an acrimonious debate! The Southerner turned to the man who sat next to him, and banged his fist upon the table till the glasses clattered against each other.

"I tell you, sir, if Texas makes formal demand to be admitted as a State, — if she asks us to protect her from the wanton cruelty and brutalities of the Mexicans, — we would be unworthy of our heritage as free men and lovers of liberty, if we refused to

listen to her pleadings! We are bound, by all our traditions as a chivalrous people, to open our doors to her!"

The reply came from Maine before Georgia had fairly finished speaking.

"Yes, and when we open our doors to her, she'll come, — and bring her slaves with her! And by her representation in Congress additional power will be secured by the South in favor of Southern interests!"

And from further down the table.

"We cannot take Texas so easily. Mexico will not permit it. If we so much as lay a finger on Texas, Mexico will declare war, — and it will be war to the knife!"

A sepulchral voice muttered, "Remember the Alamo!" — and so the controversy raged.

There was an Illinois man at the table — Owen Edwards, who had only lately come from Santa Fé, and he said, in a quiet way that was infinitely more convincing than all the loud talk of the others, that there is reason to believe that Santa Fé will sometime in the near future close its doors against all Americans — or more especially against American traders. No one knows when, perhaps this year, perhaps next. And he says that already in Santa Fé there are confiscations of the property of the American residents, on the flimsiest pretexts, or

with no excuse at all, and that Americans there are in fear of their lives!

"As well they may be," Georgia replied, "seeing that their Governor openly instigated the murder of Olivarez, the American Consul, no longer ago than last year, and quite openly rewarded the one whose hand struck the fatal blow! And the United States Government has swallowed the insult, — has demanded no reparation, — has let the murder go unavenged!"

I do not know what it was that drew my eyes to Mr. Harrod's face. I could hardly say that it was more fixed and stern than usual, yet there was a strange look upon his face that made me feel that there was in this conversation something personal, something painful to him, and I was not surprised when he rose and left the table.

Hiram had been listening, with a very evident anxiety, to these speeches, and he could keep still no longer.

"That's a pretty prospect, now ain't it, for them that's a-startin' for Santa Fé, — with all they got in the world invested in a Santa Fé assortment! Well, I reckon! But it ain't a prospect to my liking! I ain't gone so far on the road but I can take the back-track, if it's all as bad as that! I ain't a-calculatin' to walk into no mare's nest, not if I

knows it! Twicet the Deacon's money wouldn't tempt me if it's like you say!"

He looked up questioningly to Kit Carson, as if to ask him if such things could be true; and Carson answered quietly:

"All this is goin' a lot too fast! However bad things may have been — and they have been bad enough — I count on this season as a right prosperous one for the caravans trading with Santa Fé, and just for the reason that there is a war-scare in the air, and Mexico is a-holdin' her breath a-waitin'! She ain't nowise ready to declare war, as yet; and won't be, as long as there is any chance of gitting Texas back under her banner. Texas ain't asked to be jined to the United States, — and Mexico will wait for that and till the United States agrees to it! It's Santa Anna that's runnin' things in Mexico City now. It's him as we'll have to reckon with, and he's as wily as an old Indian chief. Keen and long-headed — he will be mighty careful how he riles the American people by any more bloody deeds. If the Americans is once roused up to real anger they will take Texas, without a doubt. He knows that, well as the next one; and that is what he will be determined to prevent, if it's anyway possible!"

Carson's words put a stop to the discussion, for the time being, — perhaps because the men were

convinced, and perhaps because they forgot their differences in the interest of watching the boat swinging into the wharf here at Arrow-Rock.

Mr. Carson and Mr. Breunner did not seem to notice it when the others left the cabin, they were so busily engaged in conversation — asking questions about the East and about the West. Kit Carson wanted to know about the growth of the great cities, and of the railroads, — of the development of the Mississippi valley, and what this will mean to the country west of the big river.

"Will bridges be built across the Mississippi? Will steam-cars ever make their way to the far western plains? And if they do, what will become of the trapper's and fur-trader's business?"

And then, modestly, in answer to Mr. Breunner's interested queries, Carson spoke of the wonders of the West — the uncharted rivers beyond the Rockies — the "painted chasms" and black abysmal gorges; the strange ruined cities, built, as swallows might build, high up in crannies of seemingly inaccessible cliffs; the mines of jewels, opals and turquoise; the outcropping veins of iron and lead and copper and silver. He told of the fabulously rich "lost mines of Mexico" — destroyed a century and a half ago by the Indian slaves, when they rose

against their barbarously cruel masters, the Spanish conquerors of Mexico.

It was a fascinating study to see the two men together! They are both so sincere and honest and unassuming, — and yet they are so different, in temperament as well as in education. Mr. Breunner, though he spends many weeks of each year out of doors, has not yet lost the rosy freshness of complexion that is characteristic of the German and English people. His speech is quick and forcible. His eyes are like clear open windows through which one can see the thought in his mind, before his lips can utter it — or so it seems to me.

Mr. Carson is browned and tanned by exposure. He is sinewy and supple and strong — with the suppleness and strength of a well-tempered steel blade. He is keen to notice all that goes on around him — marvelously so. He is quick to understand, is attentive and appreciative of all that is said, but there is no hint of eagerness in his manner. I am sure that his pulses never quicken. He seems ever the same — cool, quiet, imperturbable.

They may talk of the illiteracy of Carson — and I suppose it is true that he can neither read nor write — and of the erudition of Mr. Breunner; but they are both learned men, each according to the opportunity that has been given him.

I admire Mr. Breunner all the more because he values Mr. Carson's unusual talents so highly. He says Carson never forgets a trail once trodden, that he knows all of the Great West as if the country were a map, spread out before him. His courage and power of endurance border upon the superhuman. He has come through the most dreadful experiences in safety, when the bravest and stoutest of his companions have lain down to die in despair.

It is a most fortunate thing for Lieutenant Fremont, Mr. Breunner says, that he met Carson as he did, and that he was able to secure his services. With him, the success of the Expedition is assured — without him, no one can tell what disasters might not overtake them.

To-day is Sunday, yet the wharfs are crowded and there is loading and unloading of merchandise, as on every other day. The only difference we notice is that the passengers on the boat are dressed in their "Sunday-best," and for dinner we had chicken, and two kinds of pie! To-night the few men who could not wean themselves from the cards, retreated to the shadowy corners at the further end of the cabin; but most of the passengers were satisfied to sit around and talk, and listen to "them college youngsters" as they sung their glees and rounds.

Every night, below deck, there is singing by the negro "roustabouts," with Joe-Lu as leader. Joe-Lu is a sort of king among these blacks. He does with them as he will. The magic of his fiddle is a magic to which they yield themselves, body and soul.

Are their muscles sore, their bones aching, their eyes heavy-weighted with sleep? All this is forgotten when his bow begins its airy evolutions over the quivering strings. Just let the soft tones of that fiddle suggest the first note of one of their darkey chants, and they are all swaying and bending, keeping time to the music!

Captain Chouteau says that by rights he ought to refund Joe-Lu's passage-money.

"Dose niggers do twice de work, an' dey take it as if 'twas play, when dey can be steppin' to dat conjur-music of his'n!"

It must have been nearly midnight when Anna and John and I went out to watch them "load-up" at the wood-yard. The sky was utterly black — there was not a glimmer of light except where the crimson glare of the rosin-torches fell, — but within this narrow circle every object stood out with dazzling clearness.

Up and down the gang-plank double rows of negroes were coming and going. They were stripped to the waist, and their black bodies glistened with

the sweat of their labor. Balanced upon their shoulders were logs that it took two men to lift into place; yet they stepped along jauntily, giving their bare feet an extra flourish, or an extra stamp, as the exigencies of the music seemed to require.

Joe-Lu was playing a jig-tune that went with a most erratic rhythm — "Pat-a-pat Juba! Now step lively! Pick up your load there, nigger-man! Everybody laugh and sing tra-la-lou!"

When their work was done, and the wood piled high on the deck, they settled themselves to sing. Their songs are the hardest to remember! Different ones among them sing the different verses, and no two of them sing the air exactly alike — each one embroidering the score with grace-notes and sliding arpeggios to suit his own fancy — even the chorus is varied for the different verses. But no matter what liberties are taken with the notes, the time is perfectly kept, and marked with swaying body — with the stamp of the foot, with the clap of the hand.

Many of their songs are pathetic love-ballads; and it is remarkable how pure and refined in sentiment, how simple and truly touching, some of these are. Their so-called religious songs are not so admirable. They speak freely and flippantly of "de debbil." It is evident that they do not regard

Satan as the incarnation of Evil. To them he is only a tricky enemy who is to be fooled, cajoled, and out-witted.

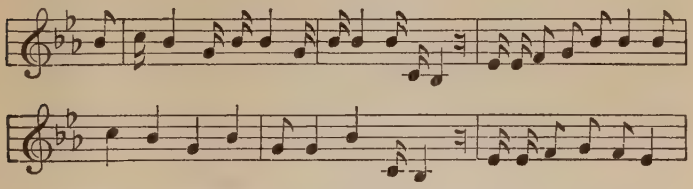
We watched them from above, and listened to their strange soft Southern speech. It was almost new to us — we have seen so few of the real Southern slaves.

I have always hated it, to hear people speak of them contemptuously as "niggers" — hated it to think of their being treated as mere chattels, as animals, bought and sold, made to labor, without themselves ever expecting to reap any share of the fruits of that labor! But as they huddled together on the bare boards and stretched themselves out to sleep, covered only by their scanty rags of clothing, they really did not look like human beings, — and I almost forgot to pity them.

Joe-Lu is as different from them as if he belonged to another race — as indeed he does. In features, form, carriage, and mental capacity he is different. These others are of the Gulf-of-Guinea type — the lowest kind of negro — and Joe-Lu's people, his mother's people, must have come from the mountains of Abyssinia. The difference between them never showed so plainly as to-night, when Joe-Lu stood there looking down upon them lying at his feet. In his attitude there was an unconscious air

of pride and disdain — yet in the look that he bent upon them there was pity, too.

Like the lonely cry of the whip-poor-will the sound of their singing echoes within me. "Nebber git back no mo'!" The words are nothing — worse than nothing! But as they sang them there was something penetratingly mournful and tragic in them.



"I crosses de ribber, an' what do I see? Nebber git back no mo'!
De debbil he's a-waitin' dere fo' me! Nebber git back no mo'!

My sister pray fo' me! Nebber git back no mo'!
My mother hol' me fas'! Nebber git back no mo'!

CHAPTER XIII

PAP BAKER'S HOUN' PUP

DANNY DRISCOLL and Farrell Montgomery and all of their crowd follow around after Himey, and seem to think his funny speeches the smartest and wittiest things ever said. Of course they know all about the "bill-of-sale," and the "oxens and cow-critters," and "that there Ury Dowton!"

"I dunno!" Himey says. "I reckon he played me for a sucker, — and I was just fool enough to swaller the bait, hook and all! I been askin' everybody that's ever been down by Sibley, if they knows of them Dowtons, and they ain't nobody never hearn tell of 'em! It looks to me like I done made somebody a present of that there boat!"

The boys go over the story — adding some new details of their own invention — whenever they can find a new listener; and Hiram undoes his old wallet, and exhibits "the very identical bill-of-sale," to make the tale more poignantly appealing. Hiram was undoubtedly born to be a stage-player, only

somehow he missed his vocation. The mock-pathetic look on his face, as he unwinds, and unwinds, and unwinds the purposely long string that holds the pocketbook together, invariably sends the bystanders off into spasms of laughter.

It is all right for them to laugh and make a joke of it, — but "w'at if dere be no Dowtons, no farm, no oxens and cow-critters? Dat not be so funny? Eh?"

Kit Carson is half afraid that there is really something wrong about the transaction, and he has offered to leave the boat at Sibley to-morrow morning, with Hiram, — "to go on the trail of the Dowtons!" If they find the "critters," as we are hoping they will do, they will drive them across country, and join us at Westport — either Wednesday or Thursday.

Each season, the "Trapper" — this boat of ours — goes up the Missouri river, well into the Yellowstone district, carrying beads and kettles, and bright calicoes and blankets — all the things that the Indians desire; and it comes back, loaded heavy as it can carry, with furs from the Northwest — hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth. But while the "Trapper" was built especially for this trade, it also has accommodations for seventy passengers, and

the Captain is not averse to increasing his revenues by so much as their passage money amounts to. But the boat is now over-crowded, and Captain Chouteau is getting cross because he cannot make his usual quick time.

And day before yesterday we had three more passengers added to our number — Mrs. and Miss Drown and Mrs. Yeats, relatives of the chief clerk.

Since they came aboard I do not see as much of Anna as I did. She prefers to sit in the cabin with the ladies, and sew on her quilt, rather than to walk the sunny deck with me — though that would be much better for her, I am sure. It is perfectly ridiculous for her to give herself such elderly matronly airs. She is only just out of her teens, — and one would think her thirty-five! I am going to make her an old-lady's cap, and tie it under her dimpled chin, if she persists in acting so very much grown-up.

Anna has her friends, — John has his, — and my nose is out-of-joint. I miss my sisters — I am not used to doing without them. I would be really lonely and forlorn if it were not for "Uncle Pliny." He looks after me and sees that I am properly amused. He is the very nicest old man — a favorite with the Captain and the Pilot; and they let us sit up on the deck, out in front of the pilot-house,

where the passengers do not dare to go without a special invitation.

Uncle Pliny goes out West every season, and he knows all there is to know about the plains, — and about this treacherous old Missouri river too.

Every bend in the crooked stream has its own tragic tale of wreck and death. To-day we passed the place where the "Astoria," with six thousand dollars in Mexican bullion aboard, was wrecked and plundered by river desperadoes. She sank without turning over, and her smoke-stacks still are standing up out of the water, apparently as good as ever. Uncle Pliny said:

"A body would shorely think that it would pay them to hist her up out'n the hole where she sank, but they say it's cheaper to build a new boat!

"It was at Massie's Wood-yard, only last month," he continued, "that the 'Elk' blowed all to splinters, so's they never found a single one of her crew, nor hardly a scrap of wood or iron to show that there had ever been sech a boat. These steamboats, seems like, ain't expected to last more'n 'bout five seasons. Before that time they bust their bilers and blow up, or they strikes a snag and goes down! It's a mighty ticklish piece of business to navigate this here stream. An' right here at Hound's Pint is about as bad a place as they is. You see that thar

long pint of land — wall, the story goes that ol' pap Baker, when he used to live thar, had a houn' pup, — an' that pup never stopped his barkin', night or day, as long as he could hear the steamboats' engines a-puffin. They's a sand-bar, over this-a-way, and a bunch of ugly 'sawyers' acrost thar, — a right puzzlesome channel it is to foller! In daytime the pilots sights by that row of ellum trees; but at night they all made a practise of pintin' the boat's nose 'cordin' to that pup's barkin'! An' one time it happened so as Lizbeth Baker went aross to the Wilsons' to borry a coal of fire, an' she took the pup with her, bein' as it were dark an' lonesome, — an' of course the pilot of the 'Chian,' a-comin' up-river, couldn't be expected to know 'bout that, an' when he heard the pup a-barkin', he turned in to the right, as usual — not guessin' that the dawg was a half-mile down-river — an' he run the boat jam into the bank! An' she had to stay thar till the 'Iatan' came along and pulled her off agin!

"I don't hardly ever take this trip that I don't hear of some accident, like what happened to you-alls on the 'Oceana' — Kit Carson, he give me the full particulars of that thar trouble. But somehow I never think that any of them things is goin' to happen to me — special when I chances to catch one of the Chouteau boats. Pierre Chouteau is

'bout as careful a Captain as they is on the river. He's counted the cleverest of all the Chouteaus — not but what they're all of 'em smart enough, the whole kit-an'-caboodle of 'em! They is a heap of 'em. The West is fair peppered with the Chouteau Tradin' Posts. They all hangs together, an' keeps the trade in their own hands, — an' keeps the other fellers out! Not that I'm a-blamin' them! We are all of us chasin' the nimble penny, — only some of us is too stiff in our jints to make much of an out at it!"

Some nice folks would think Uncle Pliny quite shocking, I suppose. He is not what could be called clean. His hands are grimy, his waistcoat is greasy, and he always gets it fastened crooked, and the top button is a nail! He was "borned and raised that-a-way," and he couldn't be himself and be any different from what he is — and I like him! He is a Tennesseean, from way up in the mountains, and he has the mountaineers' quaint drawling way of speech. In the tone of his voice there is something soft and musical, — something conciliatory, ingratiating, and altogether kindly. I love to hear him talk. The world seems a nicer place to live in, when he is near.

He has had his troubles, too, but he laughs at them.

"It is a sure-enough fact that I always gets my

full sheer of what bad luck they is a-goin'! I ain't never been wrecked on the river, but I had my grocery store at Malvern Corners burned, and struck by lightnin'. And the fust time I went to Santa Fé I was lost on the Cimarron Plain, an' nigh-about starved — had to live on grasshoppers, with only two spoonfuls of flour a day, fur I never did know how long! I done had my oxens die, an' my wagons busted, an' my goods confisticated, — fust one thing an' then another. But, law me! I don't know anybody that could stand it better'n me! Loretty — she's the youngest of my two darters — she says, 'Uncle Pliny,' says she, 'you got your health, an' 'nough to eat, an' thar's Sarah, an' you know you're welcome to go an' live with her, an' here's me an' the babies, jest a-waitin' for the time when you'll be content to quit a-roamin' an' settle down here to home with us.' An' I jest tells her, 'Uh-huh!' An' I ain't never let her know that every time I go away, I'm a-hopin' that my luck will change, so's I can take back enough money to put an ell on the house, an' git her a new loom (her ma's loom has seen its best days) — an' I'd like to git one of them big store rockers, for 'grandpap' to set in, an' fur them babies of her'n to clamber over!

"I reckon I'll come to the streak of fat in my bacon, yit, some of these days! But if I don't —

why, I ain't goin' to complain! I got too many blessin's fur that!"

Uncle Pliny tells me that the Fremont party do not intend to disembark at Independence Landing, but will continue on the "Trapper" till they reach the mouth of the Kaw river, where they will be met by Francis and Cyprian Chouteau.

John is ill, dreadfully ill, I fear! I am afraid that mother will think I have not been sufficiently watchful and careful of his health. Now they are saying that we should not have allowed him to breathe the night air, frail as he is. And only yesterday they were encouraging me to let him "rough it" with the other men! How can I tell what is best to do?

Uncle Pliny has taken him in charge, and is giving him somebody's "Sure Cure for Ague." He says that John will be on his feet, "and sassy as ever," in two or three days.

"This here river malary is pretty apt to git a-holt of strangers, unless'n they takes somethin' strong to keep it out of their systems, but the fust touch ain't like to 'mount to anythin' more than jest an unconvenience — nothin' serious, an' before time for the next spell he'll be where they ain't no sech thing as malary."

I have been reading my Chapter for the night. Sometimes I forget it, or neglect it, — but not to-night! Every word I read was comforting. I could hear my Heavenly Father's voice saying, "Sleep in peace, my child! No harm shall befall thee! All will be well."

CHAPTER XIV

THE EXTREMEST EDGE OF CIVILIZATION

MOST of the "Trapper's" passengers disembarked at Gaines's Mill, near Independence, but our party went on with Fremont as far as Chouteau's Landing, and so we saw the other two Chouteaus who had come down from their trading post to welcome the Expedition. They are undeniably French, — with perhaps an admixture of Indian blood: if it were so, they would not be ashamed of it.

They are polite, as Frenchmen never forget to be, in the presence of ladies, but they looked like pirates and cut-throats! I could not help humming, under my breath,

> "Oh, my name was Captain Kidd, as I sailed, as I sailed!
> And so wickedly I did, as I sailed!"

Cyprian Chouteau, himself, rowed us across the Missouri, to the south bank, where we found a boy with a crazy rattletrap of a wagon waiting to take possible passengers down to Westport, five miles away.

The road was bad as a road could be. It was up-hill and down-dale, through boggy, miry, yellow clay, through thickets of paw-paws, and twisted grape-vines; but we came out, at last, upon a fair straight track all shaded by oak and elm and walnut trees, through whose branches we had our first glimpse of Westport — a more cityfied place than I had expected to see. There were some dwellings of brick and stone, and there is a big hotel, and several small factories, and a dozen or more store-buildings.

Just as our boy, "Sethy," pointed it out, I saw the sign that I had been looking for — "Newell, Gentry, and Newell," but we could not persuade Sethy to take us there.

"No sir! — I ain't goin' to get into that crowd! 'F I got into that jam of wagins I wouldn't get out till dark! The teamsters to them big freighters don't care nothin' 'bout what gets in their way! I'm goin' to take you-alls straight's ever I kin to Miss Newell's."

But the way was not so very "straight!" It was turn and turn to let this string of ponies pass, and for that crowd of roysterers to go by.

Our loquacious little driver did not wait for us to question him; he went right on explaining everything in sight.

"Them shave-head Indians is Kaws, — them

over thar with the short-cut hair and shirts is Shawnees, and they farms just like white-folks. Them with the red rags on their braids is Kickapoos and Ottawas; and them tallest ones, with the paint on their faces, is Siouxs!"

The Indians, wild-looking as they were, were not any wilder than the rest of the crowd. There were black and greasy Mexicans, and negroes of every possible mixture, and Texans, and Yankees, and Germans, and Canadians, and Kentuckians — all jabbering in their dozen different languages — eking out the inadequacies of speech with eloquent and expressive gesticulation!

There were so many things to see — pedlers and auctioneers, dog-fights, and bouts at fisticuffs among some of the men, — it is small wonder that Auguste and Franchy and Joe-Lu were lured away from us, one by one. Of all our company there was only big Rob left as escort, when Sethy pulled up at "Miss Newell's" gate.

She saw us, and guessed who we were, and came running down the front walk to welcome us. My impression is that she took us all into her arms at once — John and Anna and me — and that she had a hand to spare to Rob, besides! She is only a tiny bit of a body, so I do not pretend to say how she managed it.

It was only a minute till she had John seated in a rocking-chair, with a cushion at his back, and a hassock under his feet.

"Eh, the puir laddie! He's the bonnie laddie, an' bigger than I had thocht him frae the Deacon's talk, — a-maist a man, on'y he's fair wearied oot wi' the lang journey, or mayhap it's the sickness — he's a touch o' the fever, I see. Indeed, yes, the Deacon tell't me as how he wouldna be exactly strong, so I have the good broth ready for the hettin'-up, waiting for him, for the past twa or three days. We couldna tell juist the day ye'd be here, ye ken."

As she was talking, she set out on the little stand-table the chicken-broth, that had been "hetted up," a bowl of cream, and a section of dried pumpkin pie; and under coaxing the "puir laddie" ate it all! And she made him lie down and "nap a bit," motioning Anna and me out to the porch, where we sat in dear delicious quiet — a quiet broken by only the gentlest murmur of gossip.

Sethy had been sent after Deacon Gentry, to tell him that we had arrived, but the Deacon was over to the tent-city, south of the town — a temporary market-place where the farmers, from a hundred miles around, gathered to dispose of their mules and oxen and tierces of salt bacon and other provender, to the out-going caravans.

It was an hour or more before we saw him striding up the street, and by that time John had wakened from his nap, and was ready to declare that he did not know what fever and sickness were.

Deacon Gentry had always been fondest of John, even when George was alive, and now, when he came in, he could only see "the boy — the dear lad!" He had his arm around John's shoulders, and they were walking up and down the gallery, eagerly talking, when Aunt Jeannie put her small foot down. She sent John back to his couch again, and bade the Deacon take "Miss Deya" down to the store.

"She'll be wantin' to see the wagins, an' the gear ye hae purchased for her an' the laddie. An' Tammas, he'll be wantin' to make his boo to her! An' ye're to bring him up to supper, an' a' the ither folk, that come wi' the lad an' lassie! Mistress Hubbard, here, will be helpin' me wi' the bit supper, — sae gae alang wi' ye, an' remember not to stay too lang at the store!"

Deacon Gentry has boarded with the Newells ever since he came West, — as was natural enough, they being Presbyterians, and the taverns such ungodly riotous places, as they are sure to be, so far out West. There is quite a little settlement of Scotch Presbyterians here, all kinsfolk or at least

"neebors" back in the "auld country." They came out together from Scotland to Kentucky, and emigrated from there to Westport, when they heard of the fortunes that were being made in the Santa Fé trade.

Had the Deacon not fallen in with them I do not think he would have remained here, even though there was the chance to "double and thribble his money," as Hiram phrased it.

As we were going down to the store, Deacon Gentry and I, he left it to me to furnish the topics of conversation, and I puzzled my brains for news that I thought would be interesting to him: — there was the sale of his old farm to Adalbert Jennings; the marriage of Harriet, his niece, to Uncle Asaph's son; the moving away of some of his friends, and the coming of several new families who are doing great things in the way of improving the town and country around Dixon; and I told him all about father's re-election, and some of the important things that the Whig party hoped to effect in the national Congress, — as father had told it to me.

We reached the store before I had time to observe what it really did look like on the outside. We went in at the big gate that gives admittance to the stockade at the rear of the store. Here were dozens of the great Conestoga freighting wagons,

most of them already packed full of goods, ready to roll out through the gate at a moment's notice.

Twenty bore the name, "Newell, Gentry, and Newell," but four were labeled with a specially significant name — "Randall and Randall"! And the Deacon helped me to climb up into one of them, and he explained what the load consisted of, and what percentage of profit we might expect from each class of goods, — silks, and fancy cottons, and fine hardware, one hundred percent, even two hundred, perhaps, after all expenses are paid! To talk of profits like this engenders a commercial fever in the blood of the most careless.

The Deacon was eloquent upon the subject as he took me around through the store, and showed me the big stock they carry. They have everything that one could think of — concertinas, lace-mantillas, bacon, hair combs, molasses, powder, calicoes, flour, domestics, tomahawks, silks, and squaw axes, kettles and looking-glasses and bear's grease, etc., etc. — everything in wholesale quantities, enough to fit out hundreds of wagons, a half-a-dozen caravans, complete.

They furnish not only the stocks of goods to their customers but also the wagons and teams, and the men that are needed. Sometimes they wait for their pay till the return of the caravan from Santa

Fé; and Uncle Tammas says that in seven years of the trading-business he has not lost a thousand dollars.

"Maybe they're no what ye'd ca' ower scrupulous in the way of pickin' up what's lyin' aroun' loose, — but I've found nane o' them sae dishonest as to rob the mon wha trusts them wi' his purse, or a bill o' goods. They're kittle cattle, these men o' the West! Ye can't tell what for a notion they'll take into their heads! They swear by the Deacon, an' I'd no be able to tell ye edzactly why-for! The Deacon's a douce canny mon, but he's nane sae easy! He holds them a' to the mark uncommon tight; an' he has, beside, crankous crotchets aboot spiritous liquors, an' such like. Noo, I differ wi' him, there! I'm as good a Presbyterian as onybody, but for a' that, I maintain that a wee bit drap o' John Barleycorn's brew is good for a mon — at regular times, ye onderstand! A reasonable mon knows when to take it, an' when to leave it alone. The puir fools wha let their drams go to their heads — let their troubles be on their own shoulthers! A mon wi' a conscience an' will of his own, needs not to be harried because of their fulishness."

In spite of these heretical notions of Uncle Tammas's, he and the Deacon are warmly attached to each other. Uncle Tammas is fine — like a gnarly

old oak tree, rugged, big-jointed, and strong. He wears his shirt open almost to the waist, exposing his broad hairy chest. His shirt-sleeves are rolled to the shoulder, showing the hard knotted muscles of his arms. His "trowsies" are cut short, so one can see the blue wool socks, and an inch or two of brown leg above that! I am sure he must have worn the "kilties" in Scotland, and so does not think anything of this display of bare leg. But notwithstanding these little peculiarities of his attire, he is, unmistakably, a person of consequence and dignity.

When the Deacon and Uncle Tammas and I arrived again at the "hoose" we found the boys, Auguste and Franchy and Joe-Lu and Rob, there waiting for us on the front porch.

Supper was spread on the long table in the open place between the two main portions of the building. As we seated ourselves, Aunt Jeannie began to apologize for her poor and scanty fare, — as good housewives are sure to do, — and then she proceeded to bring in platter after platter, and dish after dish, all full of all sorts of good things to eat! I am going to put it down here so as to have it to remember. Chicken, corned-beef, and fish; potatoes, yams, and okra; white bread, corn-pone, and

biscuits; plum-jell, persimmon preserves, and sweet watermelon-pickles; pumpkin-pie — yes, and I must not forget the "haggis," though I did not eat any of it! Rob ate my share, and his besides. "Never was a MacLeod as could pass a haggis by!" he said.

Aunt Jeannie caught the name "MacLeod," and she almost let the precious "haggis" go smash! "Dinnot tell me thot yere name's MacLeod! — the MacLeods of Ayr! Ye favors them mightily. Not the 'black MacLeods' but the fair-haired ones. They ithers have the black sour blood in them, but the tow-heads are aye the bonny good-tempered lot; an' the men, mostly giants, ye ken, — an' the women scranny an' little. Yes, yes, so 'twas — I know them weel, as weel I may, — my mither's third mon bein' ane of them. An' by the same token, if yere not Hamish Macleod's son! My ain half-brither's son! Ye've the vary look of him, — that mornin' when he went off to Glasgow, on his way to America. An' we heard no more o' him! I mind that mornin' as if 'twas yesterday! An' ye've the vary look of him! I'm a puir doddert blind body or I would hae known ye, soon as I set eyes on ye!"

And then there came a rapid-fire of questions, — and Rob knew all about the family tree, and they

traced it together, branch by branch, out into its remotest branchlets! And Aunt Jeannie was so excited that she forgot to get our bedroom candles, till Uncle Tammas nudged her by way of reminder.

"Bless us a'! I'm that near daft, wi' the joy o' seein' my ain nephew — for he's maist the same as that! A' the folk that came wi' us frae Scotland is kin to yer Uncle Tammas, but no related by the blood to me, — save only cousin Mary Berryman, out at the Shawnee Mission, an' she is distant, vary distant, but she is kin, an' thot is somethin' to be thankfu' for!"

As Anna and I were dropping off to sleep we could still hear Aunt Jeannie and Rob discussing the wanderings and transplantings of the "family of the MacLeod."

In the morning we overslept ourselves, so Aunt Jeannie had to come and call us.

"Na, na! Juist ye keep on yere pretty double-gowns, an' sit up to the table, — tak comfort while ye can! There's nae ane here at a' but me an' John. Ye ought to see the laddie the morn! He was up the earliest ane of a', an' he had his breakfast wi' the men, lang syne."

But we had to scurry away from the table, and dress ourselves properly, for a half-dozen of the

"neebors" called to pay their respects to Aunt Jeannie's company. I think that John must have been out visiting round, for everyone seemed to know all about us, — and about the new nephew.

There was someone "rinnin' oot an' in" all the day long, and at candle-lighting time the house was full of guests. We were friends from the start, — frankly interested in each other.

It is nine years since they left the old country, and it is a matter of pride with them that they "speak the English, pairfectly!" — yet their tongues slip into the old way of speech when they are not aware of it. It sounds sweet to my ear, for it is the language of Scott and Burns!

The first song I remember is the lullaby song that mother used to sing at bedtime — "Flow gently, sweet Afton, amang thy green braes." The first "piece" that I ever spoke in school was the "Address to a Daisy" — "Wee modest crimson-tipped flower." The first book I ever bought for myself was Scott's "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." So it is that the language I hear at the Newell's is not strange to me. It gives a distinct flavor of romance to the most prosaic conversation, — only their conversation is never just prosaic. Aunt Jeannie has told us of her childhood days on the stormy coasts of Ayr; and Uncle Tammas delights us with anecdotes

of "Sir Walter." He can quote his works, and especially his shorter ballads, by the page.

"Aye, I thocht ye would be knowin' aboot his poetry! We was neebors to him, as ane might say — twal mile across moor an' mountain, — but he made naething o' that! 'Twas not sae seldom that he would stop by for a bit o' chat. We were na rich folk, ye understand, — we had oor sheilin' an' a coo, an' that was a'; but he were na the ane to be thinkin' aboot rich an' poor, or anything like thot!

"It were maistly grannie that he come to see. She knew a-many o' the auld witch an' warlock tales, an' she could hum the tune to mony a choice old ballad, an' Sir Walter would write it doon, an' say thanks for her trouble, same as if she had a title tacked to the before o' her name! It is them that be truly great, like Sir Walter, that is the maist consider't an' truly friendly wi' them that's less than theirselves. 'Tis only them that has mair pride than sense, that wears the paughty frown. They needs to, ye ken, so that ordinar' folk may know how fine an' gran' they think theirselves to be!"

Though Uncle Tammas and his kin were humble folk in Scotland they have so prospered in this new land that they might call themselves rich; but one

would not guess it from their garb, which is quaintly uncouth. The women wear upon their feet what are salled "shoe-packs" — made by themselves from soft dressed leather. Their "linsey-woolsey" petticoats are short and gathered bunchily around their waists, and over these they wear short loose sacques, — exactly like bed-gowns! They probably have silk gowns, and India-shawls, and "boughten shoon," all laid away in their "kists," but these would be "for the keepin' an' no for the wearin'," as Aunt Jeannie explained to us. Though their costumes are ungainly, the people themselves are positively handsome, — they are so clean, through and through, so fresh-looking, and so wholesome and kindly; and they show a fine intelligence and natural shrewdness of character.

Last night the men, with their knives and "bit whittlin'-sticks," sat at one end of the front porch, and the women with their knitting sat at the other. John and I were half-way between the two groups, and we caught disjointed fragments of the conversations, as they flowed on uninterruptedly on both sides of us — quilt-pieces on this side, the Specie Circular on the other; pine-apple stitch, and the United States Bank; a soap recipe matched with a long dissertation on the deportation of the negro from American soil.

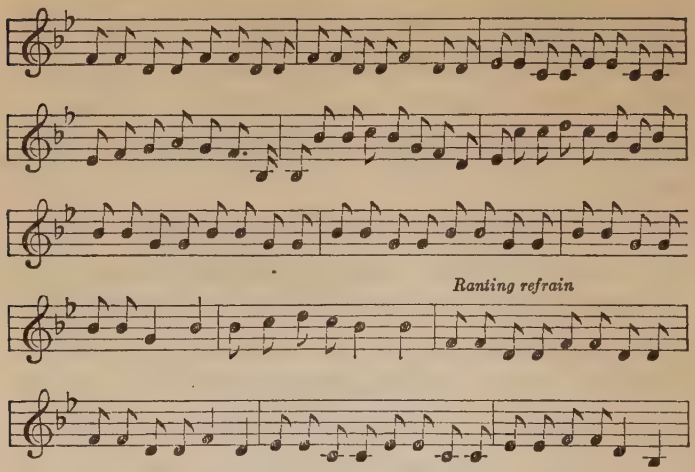
As I listened to the men, — to their serious discussion of our national affairs, I could but wish that President Tyler might have advisers as clear-headed and sensible and conscientious as are these canny Scotchmen.

They were not forgetting their own affairs, either. They really rejoiced over the war agitation.

"It will bolster up the prices, an' it's mony a day before they twa nations will be ready to begin the fightin', an' a' that time the sky will be rainin' dollars, an' lucky will be they that has their bit baskets ready for to pick up the money as it fa's. It is in times like this that fortunes is to be made."

They were in highest spirits, cracking their jokes, singing songs, and reciting verse after verse of Bobby Burns's somewhat naughty poems — "Tam o' Shanter," "Holy Fair," and all.

Boys and girls passed the nuts and cider and doughnuts around among the guests, and after that the younger ones played games, such as we play at home — "King William" and "Miss Jinnia Jones," — and the older folks sang their old Scotch ditties — "The Campbells are Comin'!" and "Robin Tamson's Smiddy." I believe I will put the song down here, as they say they do not think the poem has ever been "in print."

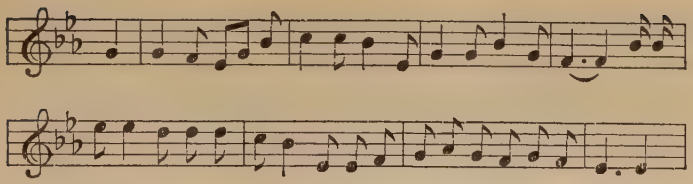


"Last Monday night, at sax o'clock, to Mirren Gibbs I went, man,
To meet wi' some old cronies there, it was my whole intent, man.
So down we sat and pried the yill; syne I pu'd out my sneeshin' mill,
And took a pinch wi' right gude will, o' Beggar's Brown, the best in town,
Then sent it round aboot the room, to gie ilka ane a scent, man.

"Yi-den-derry, yi-den-derry, yi-den-derry, yaw, man.
Yi-den-derry, yi-den-derry, yi-den-derry, yaw, man."

A ranting tune, with a nonsense jingle for a refrain!

To please old Grannie Duncan, Aunt Jeannie sang the ballad of "The Four Maries." I knew all the story, as it was in my Scottish Minstrelsy book, but I had never heard it set to the music.



"Last night the Queen had four Maries, this night she'll hae but three;
There was Mary Beaton, and Mary Seaton, and Mary Carmichael and me.

"O, aften hae I dressed my queen, and aften made her bed:
And now I've gotten for my reward, the gallows tree to tread.

"I charge ye all, ye mariners, when ye sail o'er the faem,
Let neither my feyther or mither get wit, but that I am coming hame.

"O, little did my mither think when first she cradled me,
That I would dee sae far frae hame, or hang on a gallows-tree.

"They'll tie a napkin aboot my een, an' they'll no let me see to dee,
An' they'll let neither my feyther or mither get wit, but I'm awa o'er the sea.

Refrain:
"Last night the Queen had four Maries, this night she'll hae but three:
There was Mary Beaton, and Mary Seaton, and Mary Carmichael and me."

Hiram has been here! Before we saw him we heard him whistling, — his loudest liveliest whistle, — and the tune was "Money-Musk"! A good augury!

A moment later we saw him, his hands stuck in his belt, a braggadocio swagger in his walk, his beaver cap set rakishly askew, with its tails bobbing gayly almost in his eyes. He did not wait for us to ask questions.

"Didn't I say, all the time, that that Ury Dowton was a straight-out honest feller? Your Uncle Fuller wasn't born yesterday! And his brother Oty is one of the finest boys I ever see! He's got a fine farm, — and say, them 'forty head, more or less,' turned out to be full fifty and one or two over! And that Oty never made any kind of a fuss about turning of 'em over, and he come with us right along close to Westport, to help with the drivin'.

"It was two o'clock when we come to the yard, and that Iggy Beauchemie heard us and unlocked the gates, and let us in. We was so dead tired, Kit and me, that we tumbled right down in the hay, and slept till daybreak, — and there was a right lively scrimmage goin' on, and shootin' and all, but we was too nigh tuckered out to even go and see what it was all about.

"The Deacon's been a-figgerin' up what all I'll have to invest in goods, and it is a great start. They are stackin' up the stuff now, and loadin' it into the wagins, for me and the Boissieres and Rob.

The boys is mighty puffed up, to see their names chalked out big on all them boxes and bales!

"And the Deacon told me to tell you, for you folks to be ready to start right away — the kerridge will be here for you most any minute."

Sethy Burroughs came tumbling in, a minute or so ago, with the most astonishing piece of news. "The constable's got Iggy Beauchemie down the well!" There is an old dry well in the jail-yard, that is sometimes used as a cell when the jail is full.

"Tain't real dry, that well ain't, but they put Iggy Beauchemie down there, and he's cryin' like to bust! They do say that he shot the weddin'-groom last night what they was shivareein' — and he says he never done it, and that the men that came in last night knows he never, neither, for he was a fodderin' down the critters for 'em when the shootin' was goin' on. And that other one has gone on out to the Tradin' Post, and the Deacon says that Mr. Hiram are to come down to the jail-yard and help Iggy out'n his trouble — and out'n the well. That's what the Deacon says — for you to come back with me!"

On account of this affair, the Deacon's wagons will not leave the town till after dinner, but Aunt Jeannie, and Rob, and Anna, and John and I are

going out a little way along the Trail, as far as the Shawnee Indian Mission, to see Cousin Mary Berryman.

"She'll be glad to see any friends of the Deacon's, and special glad to see Rob, who is, as ane might say, a relative — seein' he is so near kin to me!"

I've got to put this book away, this minute! We will cross the Missouri line, and be out on the plains within an hour!

CHAPTER XV

THE SIGN OF THE LONG FAREWELL

THIS is Saturday night, and we are encamped at "Black Jack," fifty-five miles out on the "Trail." It is almost three weeks since John and I and father crossed the ferry at Dixon, — and now the real journey is only just, "as ane might say," begun! The prologue is ended. The curtain is rising upon the drama. The title? "As You Like It"? "All's Well that Ends Well"? I am sure it will not be "Love's Labour's Lost" — for John is getting stronger every day, and will soon be well, — everybody says so.

Aunt Jeannie, when we were at Westport, plied him with broths and custards, in between his regular meals; and before and after eating she gave him half-glassful doses of her famous "black-draught"; and she gave me a quart of it, to bring with us, and laid it upon me as a duty that I am to see that he takes it, till it is gone.

He is saucy and prankish and mischievous, as only a seventeen-year-old boy can be, and Auguste and Franchy think he is so smart! And Deacon

Gentry smiles at his badness! Some day when I find my "little" brother rolled up tight in his blankets I am going to take my slipper to him to show him that I am still a person of authority, in-so-far as he is concerned.

The wide prairies are glorious! The wind salutes us with a sweet, fresh kiss as it passes. It tosses straggling locks of hair, and keeps Anna's lovely blue veil in a perpetual state of flutter. The rank grasses are already more than waist high, and their slender points dip and sway under the breath of the breeze, till all of the surface of the plain breaks into wavelets, as if the prairie were a river of flowing water vividly and glowingly green.

And this lovely country hasn't even a name! On the maps they call it — indefinitely — the Indian Country; and people when they write of it call it sometimes "the prairie wilderness." It is not a wilderness! And as for its being an Indian country — well there are Indians, and Indians.

The Indians here have their schools and churches, and good farms well fenced, and gardens and orchards and civilized homes. At Shawnee Mission the two school-houses are really imposing structures, that would be a credit to many an Eastern city. We had to confess our surprise to Aunt Jeannie.

"Aye, everybody is that astonished when they sees them stannin' up sae high an' gran', — an' they others is good hooses, the caepenter-shop, an' the smithy, an' the weavin' hoose. An', see ye? Yon's the mill, an' the brick kiln, an' a', an' a'; like a village it be! An' it's the big orchard they hae, wi' apples these twa years, — an' d'ye see the rows o' peas an' onions, an' the green corn — all comin' on fine! Cousin Mary Berryman an' her gude mon are the great managers! An' it's the gude preachin' an' teachin' that they give their people! An' well I know it, for times I come oot here, thinkin' to cheer her up, an' go awa' wi' more help frae them than I could ha' brought. She is a vary well-spring o' courage an' cheerfulness, an' that proud o' they little Indian lads an' lassies that's unner her charge! By profession she is a Methody, — but Methody or Presbyterian, she is ane o' the Lord's Elect!

"They lassies yander, a-hangin' oot the claes, why disna they be a-rinnin' in to tell her we're comin', 'stead of stannin' there an' starin'? Na, na, gae on wi' your wark, — we knows the way in!"

And Aunt Jeannie took us around to the back door, and we entered the kitchen to find "Cousin Mary" sitting in the center of a shouting ring of little Indian maids, who were chanting their table of fiveses to the tune of "Yankee Doodle" — "Five

times five are twenty-five, and five times six are thirty," — and while she kept a sharp eye upon them to see that each one was doing her part properly, she was shelling a bushel of new peas, for their dinner.

The "Fiveses" came to a sudden stop! The basket of peas was spilled on the floor, and the shy Indian girls were allowed to slip out of the room, as Cousin Mary rose to give us greeting. There was a tender gratitude in her manner, that made the quick tears spring to my eyes. The look of high courage is stamped upon her brow, but for all her courage, she knows what loneliness and homesickness are, I am sure. The lingering tremulous touch of her lips upon my cheek told me that much. She took to Anna as if she were her very own sister — and indeed they are enough alike to be sisters. John, she said, was the handsomest lad her eyes had ever rested upon! And wasn't she proud of her big nephew, when Aunt Jeannie explained him to her!

Rob made himself at home in the very first minute. He built up the fire, and helped pare the potatoes, and stirred the corn-pone, and put it to baking — the Indian girls looking on helplessly, — and dinner was the same as ready, before we women had the long tables set.

Aunt Jeannie knew how to make herself beloved.

She brought with her a crock full of raisin pudding, enough so each one of the eighty children should have a generous helping. All through the meal they had been on their best behavior, but when the pudding came, they forgot "manners," and gobbled it down, and nudged each others' elbows, and stole each others' portion, just as if they had been nice civilized white children!

We spent several hours at the Mission, watching the pupils at work, and hearing them at their lessons. They sang for us, in English and in their own tongue; and I persuaded one of them, not so bashful as the others, to spell out for me a verse of one of their Shawnee hymns. She stood by me and gravely nodded her approval as I wrote it down.

"Na-peache mi ce ta ha,
Che na mo si ti we.
Ma ci ke na mis wa la ti,
Mi ti na pi ni."

"Alas, and did my Saviour bleed,
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that Sacred Head
For such a worm as I?"

The spoken language of the Shawnees is musical in itself; and its syllables are open and liquid, such as fit themselves to music most aptly and beautifully.

While we were engaged up-stairs, in the school-room, Mr. Breunner and Mr. Harrod and Kit Carson came over from the Chouteau Trading Post. Mr. Breunner and his friend are going with our caravan as far as Santa Fé, and Mr. Carson is on his way to the crossing of the Kaw, where Fool-Chief's village is. He is to hold a pow-wow and palaver with Fool-Chief on Fremont's behalf — to secure his friendly services for the Expedition. We stood in the doorway and watched the Deacon's line of wagons coming down over the little divide — and a large and imposing cavalcade it was. There were thirty-three wagons, each with its ten yoke of oxen, and there was a string of loose stock — (as they call it, the *caballada*) — being driven along in the rear; and there was a little company of horsemen riding in advance, and others at the sides, armed cap-a-pie, as if they belonged to the regulars!

A dozen Indian boys busied themselves hitching up the two spans of mules to our traveling-carriage. We climbed in and settled ourselves, and all our little extra packages, as comfortably as we could — and it was then that I realized for the first time something of what our journey is to be. For months this carriage will be the only home we will know.

Iggy Beauchemie, our driver, took his place on the back of the "nigh-leader," and the carriage

swung into line with the wagons. The caravan was in motion! The Plains Pilgrimage was begun! And now I cannot remember if I kissed Aunt Jeannie good-bye, or not.

Hiram came to us, to see that everything was ship-shape, and in order, and for a long time he walked beside us talking with Iggy Beauchemie — the same Iggy that the constable had "down the well." Hiram's evidence had released him, of course, but the Deacon brought him with us to be sure that there would be no further trouble for him.

Hiram is "mighty proud" of the caravan. He says: "The Deacon's never skimpy with his outfittin', and every year he goes a little better purvided than the year before. He's got a extry lot of guns to be slung at the side of the wagons, and a howitzer, too. Last year he said when the Injuns follered us so, he wished he had a big gun — just for its moral influence on 'em! If they was to hear it go off they would be skeered into conniption fits, and wouldn't be hangin' 'round, and actin' so previous-like!

"They wouldn't be no need of havin' trouble with these here plains Injuns if it wasn't for the renegade rascally whites, that has come out here calculatin' to cheat and rob and misuse 'em. They made their

treaties, and kept 'em better than would be expected, till right lately. But they are gittin' riled up; and when an Injun gits ready for to take his revenge, he never stops to look for the special feller that has done him wrong — he settles his account with the first pale-face that he can get his hands on! And so 'tis that a body has to keep his eyes peeled for trouble! But if people goes prepared to defend theirselves, — special if the caravan is a big one and they is plenty of men, — they ain't apt to be no great danger!"

All this someway did not sound so very reassuring! And the Deacon did not help things any when he came to the carriage, and laid a big brown paper parcel in my lap, and I opened it and found that it contained three Colt's revolvers, — revolving, rapid-firing pistols, — one each for Anna and John and me.

The Deacon said he came across them, quite by accident, yesterday.

"I did not know there was one of these weapons for sale in Westport. The people who have them prize them too highly to part with them, the factory where they were made has shut down, and they are out of the market. These went with a lot of other stuff, in a forced sale, and I took advantage of the opportunity to secure them for you. It is not at

all likely that you will ever need them, but it is prudent to be prepared for the unexpected."

Miss Curiosity had the wrappers off from hers before the Deacon had half finished his explanation; and John was eager as I. The weapon is a marvel of mechanical ingenuity. Six chambers can be loaded all at once. Back of the short single barrel is a revolving cylinder wherein are placed six charges of ball and powder. They are brought successively under a hammer, that fires a percussion-cap, and so discharges the load. Six shots can be fired with inconceivable rapidity, without stopping to reload. When we stopped at our first camp, Mr. Carson came over to show us how to use the new revolvers. He says it was these same Colt's revolvers that *put a stop to the Seminole War!* The Indians were terrorized to see our soldiers stand there and fire, and keep on firing without ever stopping to reload — that is what they thought. Their medicine-men told them there was bewitchment in such guns, and that the touch of one of the bullets was sure death — so they were ready to sign for peace, when the chance was given them.

Mr. Carson showed us how to load and how to hold the gun, and gave us a lecture on the science of taking aim.

"You will never make a good shot if you try to

hold your sight on your game. It's got to be done off-hand, with a free sweep, so to speak, — like an Indian shoots his arrow."

As he spoke he saw, high in the air above us, an eagle soaring. He turned the revolver upward, with an easy unhurried motion, and touched the trigger.

"When your sight comes into line with the spot you want to hit, that very instant you want to let her go. There's the allowance to be made for the speed of the animal, an' for the wind" ——

I had been looking at the eagle, floating in the air above us. I saw it drop a little ways, and beat the air desperately with its wings — and then come whirling down! Carson looked at the shapeless mass of feathers, lying there in the dust, and then he looked at the little shining weapon in his hand!

"I never went for to fetch him down. I don't aim to do no useless killin'. But I never thought it was in the gun to do such as that. It's a special fine weapon that'll carry that far!"

With a connoisseur's delight, he examined the gun again, point by point, polishing its bright barrel on his sleeve, and sighting through the open chambers.

Our lesson on the handling of guns was over for the day, — but there are other lessons. Deacon

Gentry does not intend that we shall go down into the country of the Spaniard, ignorant of the language. He took the pains to purchase for me a Spanish dictionary and grammar, but I am not going to tie myself down too closely to book-study. In this case I am sure it will not be necessary. The traders and teamsters, those who make yearly trips to Mexico, all speak the Spanish as readily as they speak English — probably quite as correctly, too, their English not being above criticism!

Hearing it on every side, — for they seem to like to use the expressive Spanish phrases, — and having my books for occasional reference, I think the language will come to us without much effort on our part.

That first evening in camp seemed the most wonderful I had ever experienced. There was everything new to see, and so many things to do!

John and I and Mr. Carson watched the men as they made their preparations for the night. The cattle were staked out to graze, and the wagons, drawn up in a close circle, were securely chained together, wheel to wheel. At bedtime the oxen were brought in from their feeding-ground, and placed within this strong barricade, — that they might not be stampeded by thieving Indians or

devoured by the wolves that always follow close on the heels of the caravan.

Our cook, Mr. Williams, served us with the finest supper. He is a paragon and a wonder, — a little crazy, but a lovely cook. He is a preacher, too, — dismissed from his circuit, because he cannot refrain from getting *drunk* at intervals. Now that he has taken up the profession of cook, he will still be wearing his ministerial habiliments. He is especially devoted to his tall silk hat! One never sees him without it on his head, — when he is cooking, and at all times! That is why I think he must be a little crazy.

He has promised the Deacon faithfully that he will not drink a drop, while he is with us, — and the Deacon has promised him faithfully that he will have him soundly thrashed if that pledge is broken — and the Deacon will keep his word. This is by Mr. Williams's own request, as the Presiding Elder is to reinstate him if he keeps from drinking for a whole year.

After supper I began to inquire how our beds for the night were to be arranged, and Hiram came over and helped us to convert our carriage into the coziest kind of a bedroom, plenty big enough for Anna and me.

The seats were taken out, and buffalo-robes and

blankets laid down, soft as a feather-bed, and our white sheets and quilts spread over them. Hiram fixed a folding-shelf for a toilet-table, and we have two lanterns to hang from the roof, and two candle sconces! When the curtains are fastened close and tight it is as comfortable as one could wish for.

I wanted John to have a bed made in Hiram's wagon, but, no, he would sleep on the ground, with Auguste on one side of him and Franchy on the other. That first night I think they none of them tried to sleep, — I heard them talking and giggling like a lot of boarding-school girls!

It was too lovely a night for any one to sleep. Anna and I drew the curtains back, and looked up through the dark branches of the great walnut-trees, to the soft purple sky studded thick with twinkling stars.

A party of hunters came into camp with a deer slung on a pole between them. They heaped dry wood on the glowing coals, and the sudden burst of flame wrought a wondrous transformation in the scene.

There was no longer any distant purple sky, lit by trembling stars. The red blaze, vivid and intense, blinded us to all save itself, and the near-by objects that caught its glare. This place

was not the out-of-doors. We were within a Gothic temple — the tree-trunks were pillars of ruddy gold, and the branches that met overhead marked the arches of the lofty roof; the screen of leaves, stained with tints of crimson and gray and scarlet and gold, formed the painted and fretted ceiling.

Irving's description of those wonderful Moorish palaces on the banks of the Guadalquivir, the palaces of the Alhambra, came to my mind, and I wondered if the master-artist who first dreamed them, and then fashioned them in stone, had not received his inspiration from some such scene as this.

I felt Anna's soft warm hand on my brow, and her fingers lightly touched my eyelids, to close them.

"There now, Cricket! You have looked long enough! There will be other nights lovely as this!"

And she raised herself on her elbow, and tucked the clothes around me — and I was asleep in that very minute!

The next thing of which I was conscious, was the loud clattering of an iron spoon on the bottom of the dish-pan, which was Mr. Williams's polite way of calling our attention to the fact that breakfast was ready.

While the others were still lingering over their flap-jacks and bacon, the Deacon signed to me to come with him out where the *caballada* were grazing. John was there with Mr. Carson. They were looking at two most beautiful ponies, — bright sorrels and mates, — and they are ours, John's and mine! The Deacon explained:

"You would need riding ponies, of course — otherwise you would find the pace of the caravan slow past enduring. You will be wanting to spend half of your time on horseback, as soon as John is strong enough for such exercise. There could be nothing better for the boy."

The ponies already had been given names, and would come when they were called by them. John's is "Barnaby," and mine is "Aguilita" — "the little eaglet." The name suits her perfectly — she is so bold and swift and free!

Mr. Carson showed me how to braid her mane with strips of red and green cloth, as the Indians do; and he brought out from the inside of his jacket two splendid eagle-feathers, which he thrust through the braid of her foretop, at a smart coquettish angle, just as an Indian maid would wear such an ornament. And Aguilita tossed her head and preened herself with conscious pride, to find herself tricked out in a girl's finery.

Since we came out from York-State I have always ridden bareback, and now I only had to girt on a blanket, and I was ready to mount. Before Aguilita knew what was happening, Mr. Carson had lifted me, and I was on her back. She stood straight up, and plunged, and went through some fancy dancing steps; but quieted down as soon as she understood that everything was all right. Her former master had ridden her astride, and guided her by pressure of the knee; so she had to accustom herself to my woman's way of riding — all on one side — and a very awkward and uncomfortable way she seemed to think it was! Yet she consented to overlook it, as a special favor to the young lady on her back, — the poor young lady who evidently knew no better than to ride in that fashion! Mr. Carson led her around till she became somewhat accustomed to me and my ways, and then he mounted John's Barnaby, and we rode the full length of the camp, both of the ponies behaving beautifully. We have had many rides together since then.

John told Mr. Carson that he wanted to learn a secret call — something like an insect's chirp — something that no one would recognize as a call but Barnaby. He had read of some such thing in one of his story-books — in an Indian camp it had saved the hero's life. Mr. Carson smiled, but he said the

idea was not a bad one, and he taught us to make a clear short sharp trilling sound between our teeth — and our ponies know it already, and come at the summons, and no one would guess that we had called them.

If there is anything John does not know about life in the wild West, it is not for want of questioning; and because it is John who asks, Mr. Carson talks freely of his adventures, though he seems to think them hardly worth the recounting.

Mr. Breunner says:

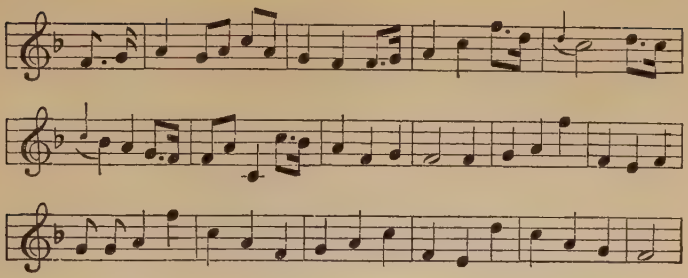
"If another Homer should write another Odyssey, there is no one so fitted for the part of the hero as Kit Carson. If the poet should tell Carson's life-story, without adding to it or subtracting from it, it would surpass the ancient world-famous epic, by just as much as Carson himself surpasses the Greek hero — in cunning and resourcefulness, in power of endurance, in self-reliance and courage. Carson is the possessor of all the virtues that especially belong to heroes, and other and rarer virtues he has, the virtues that endear a man to his fellowman. He is unspoiled by flattery, though of this he has had his full share. He is gentle-minded, and honest and simple and true — too modest a man for the world to discover his real worth."

I like to talk of Mr. Carson. It is next best to seeing him. And see him again we never will!

We did not know he thought of leaving us to-night! After supper, we rode across to the hills on the south, and raced back to camp in a magnificent wild run. I had hardly recovered breath when he wheeled his horse away and was gone. He said "Good-bye" to the Deacon and Mr. Breunner, but not to me!

Aguilita did not understand it, nor did she intend to be left in this abrupt unfriendly way. She called after him. (I would have done so, if she had not!) Mr. Carson turned in his saddle, and looked back, and lifted his arms, and made the sign that in the Indian sign-language means, "Farewell — the long, the long Farewell!" And that means, "Farewell, forever!"

I remember when I used to stand at mother's side, and lay my head against her shoulder, and she would put the twinnies down, and take me — big girl as I was — in her lap, and sing to me in the soft undertone that mothers use when there are childish hurts and griefs to be soothed. And the song that she sang then, Anna is singing now, as she sits sewing by the light of her candle — not knowing that I am listening.



"My heart's in the highlands,
My heart is not here.
My heart's in the highlands,
A-chasing the deer.
A-chasing the red deer,
And following the roe,
My heart's in the highlands,
Wherever I go."

CHAPTER XVI

AN INDIAN TRADE

IT'S a-takin' one's religious feelings too far West, to be a-trying to keep Sunday out on the plains! But I wouldn't say but the Deacon mayn't be right, for he's always one of the lucky ones, and the caravan he goes with, is always lucky, too. 'Twould naterally seem 'twould be a waste of vallyble time to stop and rest one day out of every seven, but the caravan that abides by it, accordin' as the Deacon says, does somehow come through in a leetle better time than them that don't, likewise they always strikes a good market! I reckon it's just luck, — but if 'tis, why 't behooves us to stick by it and not do nothing to contrary it. 'Tain't nowise safe to cross your luck. Anybody knows that!"

This seems to be the general opinion of the men of the caravan regarding the good Deacon's "peculiar notions" about Sunday travel. But if we had wanted to travel the last Sunday, we could not have done so! On Saturday evening, before the

time to put them inside the wagon-corral, a bunch of oxen and mules pulled their picket-pins and "vamoosed," and it took our men-folks till the middle of Sunday afternoon to round them up, and bring them in. They are as yet unused to traveling together, they are over well fed, and too full of spirit. But this condition will not last long — a few hard pulls such as they had Monday at "the Narrows" will make them meek and quiet enough!

There is a hill there about two hundred feet high, so steep the men had to rig up the "block-and-tickle" to help pull the wagons up, and then to let them down on the further side. The oxen alone were not able to do it, though they doubled the teams on every wagon.

The hill was bad enough, but the quagmire at its foot was "worser," — and it did not look like a quagmire at all! There was a dry crust over it, that would almost hold a man up, but the heavy wagons crushed right down through it, and into the mud, hub deep. The men had to wade in and help at the wheels, pushing and lifting, as the great beasts tugged and puffed and strained. A pretty sight the men were, with limbs clogged with heavy yellow and green clay, and their faces smeared and streaked, for all the world like painted Indians!

Mr. Harrod was as deep in the mire as anybody

— and it was here that we came first to really know him for what he is, a most capable commander and leader. He is no stranger to the West, having been one of the best known of the merchants of Santa Fé some five years ago. He has traveled the plains many times — once as "Captain of the Caravan"; so when we got into difficulties the direction of things seemed to fall naturally to him. As if it were a part of an every-day routine duty, he gave his orders, and the men worked together, without hurry and without excitement, accomplishing really wonderful feats of strength with no waste of effort. The men believe in "Captain Harrod," and rely on him.

"They ain't no one more capable than him, when there's a tight place to be got out of! He'll do to depend on that-a-way, same as always; though he don't resemble the man he used to be no more'n frozen ice resembles bilin' hot steam! He used to be that gay and sociable, the life of the camp. Not like he is now, a-keepin' hisself to hisself, sayin' nothin' about what's his business, nor about the stuff he's a-carryin' in them wagons of his — ammunition and weapons as some of 'em say — and it's enough to make a man right curious!"

They do not need to be prying into his private affairs. He has a right to keep "himself to him-

self," and whatever his business is, it is legitimate and righteous, — one may be very sure of that!

There is nothing so secret regarding the plans and purposes of Professor Breunner. At the University of Göttingen they have some special reason for being interested in Mexico — I think the president of the University has travelled in that country — but at any rate the Baron von Munsterberg formally commissioned Mr. Breunner to go there as the representative of the University, to make a study of the ancient Spanish and Aztec records and ruins.

"Even before the Baron mentioned the subject I had myself been thinking that I might make the trip to the Southwest," Mr. Breunner said. "If there is to be war with Mexico, this may be my last opportunity to visit that most interesting country — and there are many reasons besides."

Mr. Breunner has loaned me a map showing the country we are crossing. As I marked upon it the course of our journey I was surprised at its great length. If the crooked line were a straight one, it would reach more than half-way across this continent! It is a longer journey, and a more perilous journey, than any of us had thought! Had we known as much about it six weeks ago as we do to-day, I doubt if father would have let us attempt it.

I fancy that many of the great and daring deeds we read of, in the lives of warriors and statesmen, are done because they are undertaken heedlessly, in ignorance of the dangers to be encountered. Once in the midst of difficulties one must struggle through, and so a reputation for courage is won, that may be no more than half deserved.

So it will probably be with us. They will think us brave, when we were in reality only ignorant!

But if I could now turn back, I would not. The apprehension of approaching danger is not enough to daunt us. It is only enough to spice the adventure, to make the journey seem more enticing to the fancy. We talk of danger, but we do not really believe in it!

I was almost disappointed to-day, that I could not summon the littlest thrill of fear, when we saw, in the distance, *a band of Indians approaching!* But they did not swoop down upon us, as we were half-inclined to believe prairie Indians would do. No, they came along very sedately, fifty of them, going on a visit to their Kaw friends, up at the mouth of the Kansas river.

Their shaggy little ponies were dragging loads much too heavy for them — tepees, and cooking-kettles, and papooses, piled up anyhow all together on the trailing tepee-poles. Mr. Indian

rode the family horse which dragged the family belongings, and Mrs. Indian walked alongside, — happy in the fact that her dear lord was comfortable, I suppose!

The caravan stopped, to palaver with the band, and to "trade." Mr. Williams, the cook, got some cheese and garden-truck, enough to last us for several meals, and gave in exchange a handful of bright buttons — the poor squaws quite contented with the bargain!

Later, things began to get a bit too lively, when a dozen young braves rode up and joined the others. They were disposed to be decidedly mischievous. It is a rule with travelers to keep up a show of good-humor with the Indians they meet, and not resent anything except what is meant to be real hostility. So the men allowed themselves to be rudely shoved and jostled, and the biggest of the young Indians put his arm around Rob's neck, and tousled his hair, and went through the pantomine of scalping him, all the time whooping in the most realistic style! It was very amusing to the Indians who were gathered around, and they doubled themselves up with mirth, and stamped, and laughed uproariously. Rob laughed with them — and then proceeded to reciprocate in kind! He gave his too friendly friend a friendly squeeze in the ribs, that

made him gasp. There was a sound like a rib cracking, and when Rob dropped him he was a wiser, as he was a sadder, Indian!

This put an end to their rough play, but they still presumed upon our good-nature. They rode alongside of the wagons, and poked their heads inside the covers, and if they saw anything they wanted they seized upon it, and held on to it, and tried to make us take something in trade for it — extra moccasins, beaded bags, and the like.

While we were looking in another direction, two boys slipped into our carriage, and made off with Anna's bonnet — the one with the wreath of cherries around the crown, and Hiram would not let Anna say one word!

I had been watching three little Indian infants scrabbling for bones in among the ashes of our camp-fire, when I heard some bigger boys quarreling fiercely over something they had "found." It was my precious toilet-box! One had hold of the lid, and the other was hanging fast to the box, when it came apart and the contents were scattered everywhere! I laid hands on both of those copper-hued boys, and talked to them in the strongest English I dared to use. They understood it, and gave me all that was left of the toilet-case; but it was in three pieces; and right there before my very eyes one

little wretch of an Indian boy sat and ate up all that face-cream that Aunt Hattie B. had made so specially for me!

Most of the Indians had gone on, when one of the squaws came to the carriage, and cautiously took out from under her greasy blanket a beautiful eagle-feather head-dress. She motioned that I was to put it on my head, and as I stood there, the long streamer, all edged with feathers, swept the ground. And this she offered to trade for the wreck of the toilet-box. It was the mirror she wanted. She put out her tongue and laughed to see the reflection in the glass do the same, and she was so busily engaged in this pleasing performance, she could pay very little heed to us. The bargain was forced upon me, for her hands did not let go the box, and she hurried off with it, leaving me the head-dress in exchange!

Robideaux — one of the older plainsmen — said the squaw probably stole it out of some Cheyenne's tent. "It is Cheyenne make, not in the least like anything of the Kaws' making." I do not see how he could be so sure.

I can not help but regret the loss of my face-cream. It is serious, for the winds of the prairie burn my face. I may be compelled to borrow one of Anna's blue veils, only I hate to shut myself up

behind a smothery veil. It is so splendid — so glorious — to ride full in the face of the strong west wind! I feel that I could fly, if only I dared to launch myself in space, and trust myself to its strength!

I want Anna — lazy Anna! — to share this pleasure with me — to ride with me; but she will not be persuaded, even though I offered to let her ride my own pony, Aguilita. John is not allowed to mount his horse, Barnaby, as yet. The Deacon will not go with me. He says he is "too old to go scampering across the prairie on a half-broken mustang"; so I have to ride alone, and must never go out of sight of the caravan.

This visit of the Indians has given the men something new to talk about. We are all beginning to feel better acquainted with each other. When evening comes we draw our boxes and cushiony buffalo-robes up to the cheerful fire, and the Deacon makes a place near him for John; Anna and I sit near; and we listen, and do not say much, — as young folks should do, when their elders are speaking.

Sometimes Joe-Lu's violin makes itself heard — always from a distance, always from somewhere out in the shadows. Perhaps Joe-Lu finds the key to our feelings in the blaze of the campfire. When

the flame leaps high and scatters its glowing sparks in a fountain of fire, then the music comes full and strong and free! Sometimes when the blaze dies down and our voices drop into half-silences, the strings murmur the sweet dear strains of the home-songs.

I do not know which is sweetest, the melody, or the first hush that follows it. Nor do I know which is dearest, the bright dancing firelight, or the soft cloak of darkness that enfolds us, as we lay our heads upon our pillows, and nestle down into our soft blankets for the night.

CHAPTER XVII

SWEET FIELDS BEYOND THE SWELLING FLOOD

THIS is no monotonously level plain, stretching away drearily into interminable distance. The contour of the country is beautifully diversified, with hills, not steep, valleys, not wide, little rivers, not deep, and groves, not big enough to get lost in, but big enough to afford a grateful shade for our noonday rest.

It does not seem like the old, old world, at all, — the world we read of in the histories, the world where nations have struggled into life, grown into strength, declined and died, the world whose soil is polluted with graves! It is as if it were a star, new-created, a world new-born, — clean and sweet, and fresh and fair.

The air is exhilarating, — intoxicating! The blood, in full tide, pulses in my veins, so I can feel its throbbing. The moments are over-charged with joy, — the pure joy of living! Aguilita feels it too. She carries me at the swiftest of paces along ahead

of the caravan, or in a wide sweep around it, up to the hills on either side of the trail, and back again, before anyone has had time to wonder where we are.

The pace of our oxen is the slowest in the world, and I grow impatient lest the big company that was waiting at the Council Grove should go on without us. But Deacon Gentry said there was plenty of time.

"I would as soon they got through their election business before we appear on the scene. They usually show common-sense, in choosing the officers of the caravan, but they make a great to-do about it! There is more arguing and pulling for votes, not to mention regular knock-down fights, than in the election of a National Congressman! I prefer not to be mixed up in their squabbles and disputes!"

But we were mixed up in them, nevertheless, and notwithstanding! Just before we reached Council Grove, we stopped by Big-John Spring, to eat our dinner — a late dinner; and while we were there a party of men rode up, to get acquainted, and, incidentally, to solicit our votes!

Gallia est omnis divisa, in partes tres! They informed us that the camp at the Grove was divided into three factions, each with its own candidate for the office of Captain.

The spokesman among our visitors, "Tom Haines," was himself one of these candidates. He had been treated shamefully, he said, though I imagine, from his overbearing manner, that he may have been more than a little to blame. He said he had decided to withdraw, but that now, seeing they had tried to murder him, he would not yield one inch — reinforcing his statement with a string of profane oaths, which did not help his cause with the Deacon!

His companions explained that some of his enemies had buried a powder-flask under the cold ashes of his camp-fire, and that when he stirred the coals to cook his breakfast, there was an explosion that scattered bacon and coffee and skillets all around! He was unhurt, — and this seemed to be a grievance, that he had no mark or scar to show for the dastardly trick that had been played upon him!

This man Haines knew Captain Harrod very well, his acquaintanceship dating back to the time when Captain Harrod lived in Santa Fé. All of his remarks were addressed to this, the "silent man" of our party. He explained at length his own superior qualifications for the position he was seeking, but Captain Harrod only looked over his head, and answered him nothing. It is not like the Deacon to express an opinion until he has

heard both sides of a controversy, so our interviewers and high-pleaders rode away, without any promise of help from us.

They must have given a good report of us, nevertheless, for when we came to the Council Oak we found a great crowd assembled there, with a proposition ready for our consideration.

The deadlock between the three would-be leaders could not be broken, and seeing that no one of them could be chosen as the Captain, they were ready to accept the places of Lieutenants, — if Captain Harrod would accept the first place. They assured us that every one would be satisfied with this arrangement, but Captain Harrod brushed them brusquely and rudely aside. "Our first duty is to make camp," he told them.

We did not camp with them on the east side of the river, but crossed to the west, and took our wagons up, out of the low valley, on to the slope of the rocky bluff, that here lies parallel with the river.

The sky was dark with clouds. The coming of a storm was evident enough to anyone who had his wits about him. Hiram, as he hurried here and there, staking down the wagon covers, and double-fastening the huge chains that held the wagons together, said:

"Them fools over there sure needs a Captain, for

to tell them to stop their talkin' and get to work. Their stock is a-grazin' round loose, and they are on the wrong side of the river, if there should be a storm and if the river should go on the rampage like they say it sometimes does!"

Their foolish inaction, I think, made Captain Harrod anxious; and when a deputation came over to our side to know his decision, he said:

"I doubt that I will be a Captain to your liking — but you have chosen me! There is no time for formalities! You will take my orders at once! Go and get your stock together, and rush the wagons across the river."

They worked with a will, encouraged by the active assistance of their Captain. Much can be done in a little time, and in an hour more than half of them were in the new camp, just a little south of ours. Then a midnight blackness blotted out everything, and the men could see to do no more.

The air suddenly grew still — pulseless as Death, and as cold. A flurry of big splashing raindrops! A swishing watery sound in the air! The bitter smell of wet dust! Then the cloud-roof opened and the deluge came through! In our carriage we were sheltered from the actual downpour, yet we could hardly breathe — the air was so thick with moisture! The thunder was a loud, deep, continuous roar,

broken by dreadful explosive crashes, that seemed to come simultaneously from the sky above us, the air around us, and the earth beneath our feet.

In the carriage Anna had lighted one poor little lantern, and in the dim light we saw each other's faces, white with terror. Then smiles gradually came to the surface, and the bonds that had held us captive to fear fell away from us. I thought to myself, "The Giants who are playing up there, tumbling their thunder-clouds around, are noisy enough, to be sure, but noise is not dangerous," — and our mood changed all in an instant, so that we felt only a wild exhilaration and joy in the tumult of the elements.

We held the curtains a little apart, that we might gaze upon the sublime spectacle! Though the clouds were gathered thick above us, smothering us under their dark and watery folds, yet by the pallid quivering sheet-lightning, which came and went with every moment, we could discern the groups of white-covered wagons, the rocks, the tossing writhing branches of the nearer trees. There were intervals of dreadful darkness, and then a sudden blinding glare! The clouds would be rent by fiery forked lightning-bolts — rocks and trees and clouds edged with dazzling lines of flame! For an appreciable moment the wide landscape, from hilltop to distant

hilltop, lay before us, plainly visible, bathed in a wave of crimson light. It was a world strange and awful, yet gloriously beautiful!

In one of the pauses in the storm, we saw two figures making their way to the carriage. They carried a basket between them, — it was Himey and Mr. Breunner, and in the basket was our supper! We had had none, and were dying with hunger — only we had not thought of it till they began to unpack the eatables.

"I ransacked the box of goodies that Anna's ma put up, in case we should be sick," Hiram said. "I says to myself, I don't know as I ever 'll feel any sicker than I do right now, for a sight of good victuals, — and I reckon you're the same way inclined."

While Hiram's tongue was running on in this fashion, his hands were not idle. He lighted two more lanterns, and all the candles; he changed the seats about to face each other; unhinged the toilet-shelf for a table, and on it spread our rich repast — cold flap-jacks and corn-bread, and jerked beef, and the goodies from "Anna's ma's box," jelly and pear-preserves, and maple-sugar and raisins! And there was a double handful of butternuts — I haven't the faintest idea where Himey got them — and he cracked them with one stone on another, and cracked his knuckles at the same time. We ate and

laughed, and laughed and ate! We held our tin cups on the outside, and caught water to drink, fresh from the clouds, spicy with the essence of lightning, — intoxicating as wine!

And Anna and I held the emptied dishes out and let the rain wash them for us. Then we settled ourselves with our work to spend a "quiet evening," — and the thunder rattled and growled, and the livid lightning flashed its living bolts, and Anna set her neat little stitches in her patchwork quilt, and I, so that I should not seem given to idleness, got out my tatting shuttle and made a pretense of work. But the dampness knotted my thread so I had not three inches of edging done at the end of an hour, to show for my labor.

I was able to listen all the better to what Mr. Breunner was telling, about other storms like this that he had been exposed to, — in the passes of the Volscian Apennines, when he was on his way to Rome four years ago. He went on down to Naples, and then across to Pompeii, and was with the workmen when they found two chests of gold and silver and jewels, — and he saw the real house that Bulwer-Lytton describes in "The Last Days of Pompeii" as the "house of Glaucus." He wrote an account of his trip for the "Professoren of Göttingen," illustrating it with sketches of the more

important scenes that he visited. The Baron Friedrich Ehrlich von Munsterberg was at that time one of the University's professors, — and that is how it comes that he gave Ernst Breunner the commission to go to Mexico. It is not at all strange.

Hiram was whistling under his breath and whittling on a "patent-model" — an automatic wagon-lifter. He is always figuring on some "patent thing" when he has a moment of extra time.

"When I am in the Meetin'-house, of a Sunday, and the preacher is poundin' the big Book, and I am tryin' to foller the thread of the discourse, — right there and then I can figger out more vallyble contrivances and contraptions than I could whittle out in a month of Sundays. I don't reckon the Lord lays it up agin me, for they just comes to me, without my seekin' after them!"

And Hiram was exhibiting this latest product of his genius — when all of a sudden we came to a realization that this must be Sunday, ten minutes after midnight by John's watch! We laid aside our tasks, — and the rain had ceased, and the stars were shining.

Anna and I would not let Himey make down our bed as usual. We simply wrapped ourselves in our blankets and curled up on the seats and tried to get

our sleep. But my dreams were troubled by the roaring of old Vesuvius. The people of Pompeii were shouting and crying and running to and fro, trying to escape from their ruined city! *And it was not altogether a dream!* There *was* a great roaring, — the roaring of a flood! And there *was* shouting and crying aloud, — the men on the other side of the stream were calling for help, and no one could go to their aid! The river — the Neosho — filled the valley from bluff to bluff, a swift-flowing, ugly, muddy flood! We on the west bank were safe, — but what of the others on the low ground over in the Grove? They had lashed their wagons together, and anchored them fast to the big trees, and now they were in water that came up almost to the floor of the wagon-beds (with our spyglasses we could see everything), and the men had climbed into the trees, and were perched on the limbs like birds. They must have been wretchedly uncomfortable, but they were laughing and making the best of it — as they could very well afford to do, no one having been washed away by the flood, nor even injured.

Before we were through with our breakfast the river was within its banks again, and at eleven the men were swimming their horses across. By the middle of the afternoon the wagons were all over on our side, but some of the drivers were care-

less and got into deep water, so their loads of goods were thoroughly soaked, and every bale had to be unsewed and every bolt unrolled, and spread out to dry. The open prairie and the bushes were draped with rainbow-hued dry-goods — pink and purple, and green and scarlet and blue. The men did not enjoy the pretty sight, for it meant a lot of extra work for them.

There was so much to do no one thought of getting dinner till late in the afternoon. Then John and I mounted our ponies — John had not been allowed to ride before this time, — and we went down around the strangers' camp, and then down to the ford to watch the crossing of six new wagons that had just made their appearance from along the trail to the east.

And in the front wagon was Uncle Pliny — our Uncle Pliny! I was off my pony and answering to his "Wall, howdy, Miss Deya!" before one could say "Jack Robinson!" He looked around with a keen glance that took in everything that had happened.

"It looks like you might have had a right smart sprinkle of rain here last night. We heerd the thunder, an' seen the lightnin', but they wa'n't enough rain fell to lay the dust. Lucky for me! I'm that short-handed I don't know what I'd a done

in a storm! I thought I wan't never goin' to ketch up with you-alls. Dag-gone that Danny Driscoll an' his crowd! They took the notion that they wanted to do a little huntin' on their own hook, before ever they jined with the caravan for good, and they borryed two of my best men, Downing an' Terwilliger, for to go with them as guides. They went up around by the Kansas an' 'll swing round to meet up with us somewheres nigh the Cottonwood Creek."

Uncle Pliny had to stop, to mop the sweat from his face, — and to divest himself of his "weskit."

"That there Danny 's a reg'lar chip off the old block! Jest like his dad — old Van Amburgh Driscoll. He's the beatin'est for always gettin' what he goes after, — in politics, an' ever'thin' else. He's got that way with him, that you can't say him no. An' them boys soft-soaped me into thinkin' I was as young as I used to was, an' that I could do the work of two or three men, a-taking care of their wagons as well as my own!"

The sun was shining down with an unusual fierceness; there was no breath of air stirring in the valley. The high hill invited us. By devious ways, in straggling groups, we climbed to its summit, and there we found an almost level plain stretching away to the western horizon. Only on its eastern

face was the hill abrupt and rocky. Anna drew me down beside her on a thronelike jutting mass of stone, and we looked across the valley to the hills east of the river — all so richly clothed with the soft greens of June, now brightened by the baptism of the rain. A last vanishing beam from the low setting sun lay upon the western plain: it spanned the shadowy valley, and lighted the distant hills with a more than earthly glory.

And Anna was singing — and I with her, — and we did not know that any one heard us, till Joe-Lu's violin took up the heavenly strain —

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dressed in living green.
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.

I had not thought the men would know or care for such music. I had not thought that Joe-Lu could play it. But he knows all of our dear church hymns — "There is a Fountain," "O, could I speak the matchless worth," "Jerusalem the Golden," "I'm a pilgrim," and "I'm a stranger." The violin notes, thrilling, strong, upsoaring, inspired and led us. The men's voices rose in a great splendid unison, and their hearts were brought into unison. The Sabbath look was upon their faces — a gentler, kindlier look. They seemed, indeed, like different

men as they sat there quietly talking, plucking the grasses, idly tossing the pebbles in their hands.

As darkness fell they went down into the valley; but our wagons were brought up and our camp for the night was made at the edge of the cliff, so that John should not breathe the miasma of the flood-drenched lowlands.

The air was ineffably pure and sweet. The velvet-fingered breeze tossed our hair, and touched our cheeks as if in friendly playfulness. There was just a faint edge of a moon low down in the southwest, and then it slipped away, and left us only the light of the stars.

Jupiter was almost overhead, shining with a light bright as moonlight. Our shadows showed distinctly on the white rocks where we were standing. As I looked at the brilliant star, I thought I could discern two tiny, tiny sparkles that might be two of its satellites, and so it proved. Mr. Breunner brought out his telescope, and sure enough there they were — two of Jupiter's little moons! So it was really moonlight that we were enjoying.

Hiram has a very practical knowledge of the positions of the heavenly bodies, at the different hours of the night, and for the different months of the year, — a knowledge passed on down to him from his "grandpappy," who was a "shepherd-man" in England.

Hiram reads the time of night from the Great Dipper as it circles about the North Star; and he needs no almanac to tell him the month, while the constellations of the Zodiac swing in their greater circle in the sky. And he was the one who was most eager of all to learn the names, and to study the peculiarities of new star-groups, as they were revealed by the telescope, — the Milky-way, the Pleiades, the double-double star of Lyra, and Saturn's rainbow circlet, and the red star, Mars, and the distant Neptune.

Such nights are never to be forgotten!

We were startled by the shrill call of the bugles — "*Taps!*" — the signal for retiring. The men gave heed to the summons, but Anna and I were not yet ready to leave a scene so beautiful. This spot, so it seemed, was the very edge of the world, for the night-mists had settled heavy over all the valley, and before us was only the pale shimmering surface of a mysterious sea, that stretched away to the low horizon stars.

Anna's arm was around me, and as she drew me close to her I felt her heart beating, in strange, uneven throbs. I felt a tear, not my own, upon my cheek! I spoke her name. She rose and brushed her hand across her eyes.

"You will try to make me believe that I am

crying," she said, "but I am not. I am the happiest girl in the world! Only I was thinking of my mother — so far away. If we had only a little birch-bark canoe, Deya, we could launch it upon this wide sea, and the west wind would blow us home, back where mother is!"

I laughed at the fancy, and told her that the only voyage that we were likely to take to-night would be the voyage to dreamland. "And we will not get far into dreamland, if we do not hurry to bed!"

But Anna is not to be hurried! It takes her an hour to make her bedtime toilet! Her mother brought her up that way, and she would not think she could close her eyes, if everything were not done *just so.*

I scrub my face, and twist my hair up in any kind of a knot, slip into my double-gown, tie on my night-cap — "all with a whew," as sister Martha would say, — and I am ready to jump into bed! But with Anna it is like getting ready for a party. So much brushing of her hair — so much washing, and I do not know what all, — and then she lays herself down, with her lovely locks laid out smoothly around her on the pillow, and her beautiful hands sweetly crossed upon her breast, not to stir till morning comes. She seems an aureolaed saint — but even saints may get fretful, I suppose, if they

are kept awake by owlish scribblers! I must close my book, so Anna can close her sleepy eyes.

We are not to leave Council Grove till to-morrow morning. The dry-goods are not yet dry enough to be rolled up and packed away in the wagons. The newly-elected Lieutenants are familiarizing themselves with their duties, and getting their divisions into shape. Will Aljoe has the first division, Enos Quackenbos — quite a dashing cavalier — has the second, Tom Haines has the third, which is our division, and Stoneman has the fourth.

When we get as far as Pawnee Rock, where the danger from Indians is supposed to be greater, the caravan will travel in four lines, four abreast, each line headed by its Lieutenant; but until that time the train will string out in two long lines.

Each wagon has its own number and place in the procession, and the teamsters are drilled so they will know just what to do at the different calls of the bugle — to swing out, to draw together, to advance by twos and fours, to form in double circles, etc.

From our place on the crest of the hill we watched the maneuvers, and all that was going on in the busy camps below. It seems that no place could be lovelier than this, with its curving lines of hills,

the broad valley between, the winding river whose course is marked for miles by the wide belt of oak and elm and walnut trees — such a grove as we have not seen since we left the Missouri river, and whose like we will not see again in all the course of our long journey. The bluff itself is most picturesque. It rises a hundred feet above the plain, and is crowned by a ledge of rock, moulded in fantastic forms. There are ragged boulders that have separated themselves from the main ledge; there are caves and grottoes, and mountain gorges, all in miniature; and everywhere the surface of the stone is pitted and marked with veins and crannies and crevices where hardy little ferns are growing. I have some of these pressed in the letter that I have written to send home.

Enos Quackenbos tells me that almost any day now we may meet a detachment of Uncle Sam's soldiers riding eastward, returning from their patrol of the trail; so, if we have our letters ready, they will take them back to Fort Leavenworth, from which point there is regular mail-service.

John and Mr. Breunner and I are planning to ride over to an old Indian Butte — a high pile of stones — on one of the hills to the south of camp. Uncle Pliny has aroused our curiosity in regard to it. He says it is a monument to a Spanish mission-

ary who was treacherously murdered here — so long ago that his name is no more remembered, even among the Indians who received his ministrations.

"I was up at that Old Butte in '32, an' they was marks on the stones that the medicine men pretended they understood. Whether they did or no is another thing, but I doubt you'd find them now, fur the monyment's been tore down an' built up again twicet or thrice, since that time — curiosity hunters, I reckon, looking for what they could find."

CHAPTER XVIII

WHERE FLOWERS GROW THICKEST

WE went to the Butte as we had planned — only Lieutenant Quackenbos seemed to think it necessary to accompany us. I thought I was going to like him, but I don't. He is handsome, and knows it too well; is "keen as a briar," to use Uncle Pliny's phrase, but he knows that too well also. He has held several petty offices down in Paducah, and that makes him think he could run the National Government! For all of his dashing debonair ways, and his constant smile, I do not think he is either good-natured or good-hearted. He speaks unkindly of everyone. He does not "think much" of any of his associates in office. Stoneman is too slow; Aljoe is ignorant; Haines is dictatorial; and Captain Harrod is too cold and silent and severe.

"I have crossed the plains twice before this time, and I never saw the men held in like this! Guards, same as if it was a regular military company, —

and special patrols, — and no going out of camp without the Captain's permission! The men will not stand for it, being curbed so tight, — special when there is no need of it!"

We were riding ahead of the others, and I pulled up my pony and told him, flat, that our lives were far safer in Captain Harrod's hands than in the hands of an "easier" man. I told him we ought to be thankful that the captaincy had not fallen to such a one, thankful that we had a "hard, sharp man" to look after our welfare, so we might sleep in peace, in the midst of dangers. And then I waited for John, and rode the rest of the way with him.

The Butte hill was a high rounded knoll, that overlooked a wide stretch of country, but the Butte itself was disappointingly insignificant. It was only a loose pile of stones carelessly heaped together, and we were about to go, without looking for the stone with the mark upon it, of which Uncle Pliny had spoken, when John stooped and picked up something that may have a real historical value. It was a thin slip of tarnished silver, attached to a scrap of leather; and it had a name engraved upon it in old Latin letters — the name "Padilla." I somehow feel sure that this was part of the cover of an old prayer-book, and that the name is that of

the Spanish missionary who is said to have perished here.

Lieutenant Quackenbos took it upon himself to pierce the piece of silver, and to thread it upon his watch-guard, for me to wear around my neck. "There is nothing so lucky to keep about you as a piece of silver that has been lost and found again — the older it is the better." And he showed me a battered ancient silver coin that he always carries in his pocket. I do not believe in such a "lucky-piece," but I am wearing mine, nevertheless.

Danny Driscoll and his friends have arrived in camp. We found them waiting for us at Diamond Springs, yesterday. Enos Quackenbos does not like Danny and the rest of them. So very strange! He says they are "foolish rattle-pates." As a matter of fact, while they are lively and gay, they are a sensible lot of boys, well-born and well-bred.

Bert Fones is of the Alden Mayflower stock, and his father is one of the richest men in Missouri, since he associated himself in business with the Scarritts of St. Louis. Farrell Montgomery was the "class-poet" at Missouri University last year, and he is a cousin of Danny's. Of course Danny is the leader among them, he could not be anything else, seeing that he is old Van Amburgh Driscoll's son — Van Amburgh Driscoll, the most popular and influential

of Missouri's representatives in the National Congress. These three, and Twank Thomas, are inseparable; and when Twank's father decided to send him to Santa Fé to get acquainted with his half-Spanish cousins, it was a foregone conclusion that the others would have to go also. They are looking forward to three months of solid pleasure. Their hunting-trip was a great success, and Danny has brought with him the antlers to prove that he killed two splendid buck-deer.

"Das make me mad! For w'y dat John not get to fin' no deer lak dat? I see elk-sign dis mornin', an' if John kill one elk, dat be more better dan two buck-deer."

So Franchy exclaimed; and he promptly arranged that a little expedition of picked hunters should go out, and John with them. I do not know how they managed it that John got the chance to kill his elk, but it happened, somehow. And Franchy was prouder for John than he would have been for himself.

"Dat boy only see de nose of de big feller, an' 'e lif' 'is rifle up, slow an' steady, lak 'e been shoot de big game for t'irty year! Yaas, you may believe me! An' de gun speak sharp, an' short, Bang! De bullet go straight to de heart! 'E joomp, one time, an' drap in 'is track dead, an' never keek again!

I show you 'im, an' you say dat boy make one fine firs'-class shot!"

When Auguste and Franchy were bringing in the big animal, in crossing a log over the creek Franchy slipped and went, souse! into the water, so his buckskins were wet through and through. Rob persuaded him that he ought to borrow somebody else's pantaloons and let his dry — and Rob and John promised to see to the drying! A pretty trick they did with those trousers!

Buckskin has the charming quality of retaining, after it is dry, whatever shape it is pulled into when it is wet, and Rob and John pulled and stretched those articles all out of shape — each leg as wide as a Highlander's petticoat, and as short! They are going to put them where Franchy will be sure to lay his hands on them the first thing in the morning, and then they will call him, and have a crowd there to see him come out in his fancy costume! They are doubling themselves up in spasms of unholy glee thinking of the ridiculous figure he will cut, — and that is my dear brother's way of expressing his gratitude after Franchy's getting that elk for him!

Buckskin 's the only wear. All who do not possess buckskin suits are having them made, — that is, Danny, and his crowd, and John — and Deya. Uncle Pliny looked through the different packs of skins

that were offered us, and found some that were dressed to a beautiful soft white finish, that he said would do for a suit for me, and he has been giving me lessons in the making of it. It is to be "genuine Indian," exactly according to the pattern of a Cheyenne Indian maiden's outfit. I am sewing it with sinew thread, — and I suppose I should be thankful that Uncle Pliny does not insist on my using bone needles! There is a neat little pattern of bead embroidery around the slashed neck and sleeves. It was Uncle Pliny who showed me how to do it, and then when I had it most done he looked at it and laughed and chuckled, and wiped his eyes, and laughed again. And when I asked him what there was so funny about it, he said:

"It ain't the work. You're a-doin' of it all right! But I jest happened to think about the meanin' of that thar pattren! Yes, sure! They's a meanin' to ever' pattren a squaw makes, whether it's beadin' or basket-weavin', or blankets or what not. An' the Injuns everywhar understands it, same as they all understand the sign-language. But, honest-to-goodness, I never thought 'bout the meanin' to this one, till this identical minute, — if ye must know, it means 'Young squaw roamin' acrost the earth lookin' for a tent an' a husband!' Honest-to-goodness! When I was a-stayin' with

the Cheyennes, that time they had me prisoner, I seen 'em workin' it on the jacket for one of the young gals. An' 'twa'n't looked upon as no discredit to her. It's nateral enough."

If John had heard this I would never have heard the last of it, but I could afford to laugh with Uncle Pliny. I told him I thought it a very nice pattern indeed, — and so appropriate! I do not believe a word of what he said about the meaning of it, though it was all true enough about his having been a prisoner with the Cheyennes. He and three others were kept in captivity for weeks, and sometimes they were treated well, and sometimes they were "given a taste of the torture." The regular troops came upon the camp and rescued them, but one poor fellow, young and bold and desperate, had made a dash for liberty, and had been followed and murdered — and scalped! Such things do happen, even though the plains are more or less regularly patrolled by our troops.

They say that every heap of stones beside the trail covers the grave of a white man, — and I had only thought of them as the places where grew most abundantly roses and primroses, and the sensitive-brier! This last — the sensitive-brier — is the most interesting plant that grows on the prairie. Its blossoms are soft clustered balls of rose-red stamens,

powdered over with grains of golden pollen. The petals are "inconspicuous or wanting." But it is not the blossom that makes the plant remarkable. It is sensitive, as living creatures are — sensitive to light, sensitive to touch. When the world is dark, it shuts its eyes and sleeps. Its leaflets fold together, palm to palm, as little hands are folded in prayer. The leaf-stem droops heavily against the stalk, as heavy eyelids droop and close. When the daylight comes again, it wakens, — unclasps its hands, and lifts up its arms to the sky. But always it is timid and afraid. Its leaves shiver and close at the slightest touch — at the brushing of the meadow-lark's wing, even at the trembling of the ground under our horses' feet, as if it feared that we would ruthlessly trample it to earth.

CHAPTER XIX

"DE WOLF AN' DE COYOTE, DEY NOT WAIT"

FRANCHY is still wearing borrowed clothes, while Rob is laboring over those buckskin trousers, to bring them back into proper shape. The trick did not turn out quite as Rob had planned. Franchy good-naturedly took another man's turn at guard duty, in the middle of the night, and if he tried to put the trousers on or not, no one was the wiser, for somehow in the morning they came to be by Rob's side, and his trousers were gone — and Franchy was there, and it was his time to laugh!

"Dat was sure fonny sight! 'E so beeg, an' dem so short! Dat was de mos' re-dic-u-lous! 'E be not so smart, anodder time, I t'ink!"

The boys have been complaining of the dullness of camp life.

"No Indians! No buffalo! No nothing but prairie-dogs to make the landscape lively, and antelope so tame they almost come when you whistle!"

They had been telling us every day that we would be sure to meet someone going east, — soldiers or travelers or trappers, — but it was not until to-day that the expected happened. A shabby procession of a dozen sun-dried rickety wagons drawn by shabby skinny oxen appeared around the turn of a hill. They swerved aside to the north, apparently not intending to stop, even for an exchange of civilities. Danny and Hiram and some of the others rode out to intercept them, as we did not wish to lose this chance to send our letters back to the States, "and when they saw there was money in the job they began to show themselves more friendly and communicative," Danny said. "They told us they had wintered out by Bent's Fort, trying to do a little trading with the Indians of that section, but they said the Government was against them; they had no protection, and the Indians were so uncertain, and seemed so inclined to do them harm, they had packed up what was left of their outfit, and now they are going back to Kentucky, to stay there. They had one bit of good news for us. They say we will find scattered herds of *buffalo* all the way from Big Cow Creek to the Caches!"

A caravan always expects to procure on the plains sufficient buffalo meat to give variety to its bill-of-fare. There is nothing that stays sweet and

eatable longer than well-cured "buffalo-jerk." When we get down into the desert country we will need it, though now we are living on the fat of the land. Every day we are served with the choicest of game — venison and antelope steaks, and fowl of every description, cranes and ducks and turkey, all we care for.

The fowls are cooked Indian fashion, with the head and legs and feathers left on. They are carefully drawn, and stuffed with bread-crumbs and bacon and savory herbs, and then the bird is thickly plastered over with mud — just plain mud — and deposited in a "hot-pit" and covered over with ashes and coals and earth. In the morning the mud is baked to a hard crust, like brick, and when that is cracked and peeled off, the skin and feathers come with it, leaving only the juicy and tender flesh. It is cookery in perfection.

Anna is quite reconciled to our having a man cook. At first she did not like the idea of having a man's hands in the biscuit dough, if she had to eat the biscuits; but she is satisfied that Mr. Williams is as neat and particular, in regard to his duties as cook, as she herself would be. He takes an interest in his work, and likes to show us how he keeps his pots and pans shining, and no one could be more accommodating than he.

To-night he made a kettle of molasses taffy, and we made a childish frolic of the occasion, inviting Danny and Farrell and Twank and Burt Fones over to help pull the candy, and eat it.

There was a smooth bit of ground there, covered with a thin fine mat of buffalo grass, slippery to the foot as a waxed floor, and the boys suggested that we might have a dance. Anna and I agreed with them, and said it would be lovely, if only there were two more ladies, to make a set complete. It was nonsense, forgotten as soon as said! But fifteen minutes afterward two charming and coquettish maidens blushingly greeted the company with two sweeping and graceful curtsys!

Burt Fones and Farrell Montgomery had gone to their wagons, and borrowed from their stock of goods some of the finery that had been destined for the señoritas of Santa Fé. They were arrayed in full flowing skirts, and mantillas — and *curls!* They were real Spanish maidens, and could speak only Spanish, and we were obliged to frame our replies in that same tongue!

Danny, with his tile under his arm, took pretty Farrell as his partner, and they gravely began the steps of the minuet; but in the middle of the stately dance Joe-Lu — at a sign from Danny, I suspect — dashed into the gay strains of "The

Ladies' Delight," and Danny cried out, "Choose ladies for the Reel!" and seized me, and swung me into position at the head of the set. Ernst Breunner chose black-eyed languishing Farrell, and John took Burt Fones, the sweet girl in the pink petticoats, and Hiram and Anna made up the set.

The fine soft mat of the buffalo grass was under our springing feet; the crescent moon was swinging overhead; the music thrilled in our hearts; its full current swept us off our feet, and dance we must whether or no, even as the leaves on a bough must dance when the strong winds blow! "Lady Howe's Fancy," "Sir Roger de Coverly," "Virginia Reel" — the music came quicker and faster, till we were breathless. It was an all-too-lively performance. Anna's blue eyes were shining like stars, and her cheeks were like twin roses. When John and pretty Burt were "coming down the middle," Anna and I joined hands and danced out of the set, and left the boys to finish it as they could — and the bugle sounded "Taps!"

Toward midnight I heard men shouting to each other in tones that made me thrill with fear, and Rob ran by and called to us the dreadful news. Leonard Morris had been murdered! Lieutenant Quackenbos, with three of his men, was making the

patrol of his section of the camp, when it was proposed that they should ride out to the hill on the north. Four left the camp, and only three of them returned. When they missed Leonard Morris they thought he was lagging behind, and they waited and called him, and then his horse galloped by, riderless, with blood on the saddle, and in the horse's neck an Indian war-arrow.

Indians about to attack the caravan! That was the word that was passed about among the men, and they began to look to their arms and defenses, though the Captain and Franz Bach were both agreed that this could not be the act of a war-party. Warriors planning to attack the camp would give no such plain warning of their presence. It was more likely the work of a solitary Indian runner who had unexpectedly found himself in a position where he could wreak vengeance on a hated paleface.

It seemed a hopeless task to try to find the body, and a most dangerous one, as well. No one was willing to volunteer for the duty, until Joe-Lu pushed his way to the front.

"W'at dis you say? Wait till daylight, eh? De wolf an' de coyote, dey not wait! An' maybe dat boy no daid. W'at den? I go myself! My dog, 'e go wid me! Banff, 'e follow dat blood-trail!"

He was not to be dissuaded, though Franchy

begged and implored; but he saw that this was useless.

"W'at I say is not'ing! 'E go, jus' de same, for all I say! 'E always lak dat. Eef dere be one in danger dat Joe-Lu boun' to go! Save my life dat-a-way two time. Yaas! An tree four odder man! 'E dat rackless, cain't do not'ing wid 'im, 'ceptin' to let 'im go!"

Joe-Lu was not heeding. Just as soon as he had the Captain's permission he dropped down into the tall grass, Banff by his side, and disappeared.

The men listened and waited, — fancied they heard a cry for help, — told each other in whispers that it was but the cry of a wolf, — waited, — and grew white with apprehension.

The moon came out from behind a cloud, and they saw Joe-Lu returning, bending under the weight of the body which he carried across his shoulders as a hunter carries a deer.

The caravan is not to be delayed. We will leave this place to-morrow morning, only a little later than usual.

There will be another heap of stones by the wayside — a heap of stones where wild roses will grow and bloom!

CHAPTER XX

A DROP TO KEEP OUT THE COLD

SINCE we came out on the plains we do not hear Joe-Lu's violin as often as we did. While we were on the river he played every night, so that our dreams were but vagaries set to music.

All of the negro boy's thoughts and affections seem to be centered upon the old gray wolf-dog, Banff, whom he found two weeks ago by the side of the trail — dying, as he thought, of a gunshot wound. It looked to be one of the big gray timber-wolves, but when he went up to it, to shoot it, so that it should not linger and suffer, it turned its head to him and tried to lick his hand. Whether it was wolf or wolf-dog, it had somewhere learned that human beings could be kind, and Joe-Lu lifted the poor creature in his arms and brought it back to camp, and nursed and fed it; and now it follows him everywhere, "lak an ol' house-dog," as Franchy says.

"Joe-Lu nevair take lak dat to no common ol' dog. It is jus' dat dis is a wolf — a sure 'nough

wolf! An' 'e let Joe-Lu do ever't'ing wid 'im, an' not let no odder man touch 'im. Me, I not get too near 'im! An' de men, dey would lak to make frien's wid 'im, sence las' night, w'en 'e an' Joe-Lu bring in dat Leonard boy. But 'e not make frien's! 'E show dat 'e be wolf! 'E show dem w'ite fangs, an' roll 'is red eyes! Dey keep away from dat Banff! An' Joe-Lu lak it dat no one make too familiar wid 'is dog."

But Joe-Lu has taught him that Anna and I may lay our hands upon his head if we choose, yet we do not often avail ourselves of the privilege. They are saying in the camp that the dog Banff is worth more to the caravan than any dozen men who could be picked — the best guard that we could possibly have. If it had not been for him Leonard Morris's body would not have received Christian burial. Poor Leonard! His life sacrificed so needlessly! The whole blame is upon the shoulders of Lieutenant Quackenbos. He is repenting his foolhardiness, and his disregard of the rules of the camp, — repenting in sackcloth and ashes; but that will not bring young Morris back! The people of the camp have turned against him as if he had purposely led his friends into danger. He understands the feeling among them, and at once resigned his position as Lieutenant.

It was supposed that Franz Bach would be elected to fill his place. But elections are not certainties until votes are counted. Half in mischief, not thinking that they would take him at his word, Burt Fones slyly insinuated here and there that it would not be a bad thing to put in a vote for old Van Amburgh Driscoll's son, *Danny!* And each one smiled to himself and said, "Why not?" and the word was passed along. The men are many of them from Missouri, and in Missouri "Driscoll" is a name to conjure with. So Burt Fones discovered to his surprise, and so it was that Danny was elected Lieutenant of "the 2nd."

"He's his daddy's son all right,—a chip off the old block, — and he'll run this here Division good as any of 'em. It will tickle his old man most to death to know we done the boy the honor."

So the men said; and Danny is justifying the predictions in his favor. He accepted the position gracefully, and then he told them that "the 2nd" was to be bossed by no single Dictator, but by the boss Triumvirate, — himself, and Franz Bach, and Uncle Pliny Thompson.

"Them three makes a strong team," Hiram said. "Danny's got the git-up-and-git, and the other two will keep him on the right track. The other divisions will have to hump themselves if they keep up."

Hiram's words had a quick fulfilment. This afternoon, when the "Norther" struck us, Danny's section was the first one in place, and his Division suffered less than any other. Haines was too excitable to give the proper orders; Stoneman was too deliberate and slow; Lieutenant Aljoe was "all at sea"; and only "the 2nd" was prepared for the storm when it fell upon the camp. The wind was nothing less than a hurricane, and with it came a phenomenally sudden drop in the temperature, — from above ninety degrees, down to forty-three, and all within an hour.

There is something terrifying — appalling — in a change so great, and so sudden, as this. It benumbs the faculties and paralyzes the body. Anna and I could have done something to have made things in the carriage more secure, and ourselves more comfortable, but we did not think of trying to help ourselves. We sat, huddled together, shaking and shivering, doing nothing at all, — waiting for something to happen. And happen it did!

There was an all-pervading hungry roar — as if a thousand lions were voicing their impatience to devour us! I whimpered, with my head against Anna's breast. "It's worse than Jack's Giants after us! We will be broken to bits, and our bones ground up, and scattered over the prairie!"

We were in mortal terror. There were shrieking, grinding noises everywhere about us, — wheels grinding on wheels, chains clattering and grinding on each other, bolts twisting and grinding in their sockets.

There was a tearing, rending sound, — a crash! The top of the carriage was gone from over our heads! The wind caught it and whirled it upwards. Like a great awkward ungainly bird it swooped and turned and flapped its black wings, and, mounting higher and higher, it disappeared in a thick cloud. The carriage under us gave an upward leap, as if it would follow. We were, ourselves, in the air, and the ground was heaving beneath us, — and the earth rose and beat against us. But it was something solid to cling to, and we embraced it fervently, and dug our fingers into the matted grass of the sod, — and we lay there, hazily thankful that we were not riding on the wings of the storm, thankful that we were still alive. I did not think about John, or anyone, till Hiram came and found us. He took his "big girl" in his arms and carried her to his wagon, and I stumbled along after them, holding on to his jacket, and the wind buffeted us so that we could only go forward by loops and zigzags — and twice we fell.

We were in Hiram's wagon, in a nest made in

the high-piled bales of goods, and we drew a soft robe over us, and, though it was early afternoon, we slept! Nestled under the warm cover, our frozen blood again began to flow freely in our veins and with the warmth there came courage to our hearts, so we were no more afraid of the fierce wind.

When we awoke we heard the strangest noises outside. We raised the back curtain and saw the cook-wagon performing wild antics, leaping and straining at the chains that bound it. The cupboard doors at the back were swinging and banging, and the tin dishes were all abroad — pans and plates and spoons rattling about us like hail! Mr. Williams, the cook, was there dancing up and down — crazy-drunk! He had "taken a drop to keep out the cold" — and the drop had become a fiery stream flowing down his throat. He did not in the least know what he was doing, and he was screaming and shouting, and singing camp-meeting hymns, — and the Deacon had promised him a thrashing if ever he drank another drop!

I do not know if he received the thrashing, but he got something bad enough to make up for it if he missed it, — a most dreadful dose of medicine, that the Deacon with his own hands prepared for him! Hiram says he is "the color of a dirty mop-rag, and with just about as much backbone to him, and

I'm making a bold guess that he won't break out, and break his word again, this trip!"

The men were going on about their work as if the gale were the gentlest of breezes. Hiram was busier than anyone, repairing our wrecked carriage and all. He fitted the carriage-body with wagon-bows and covered it with canvas, and put up hooks for our belongings, and made it all nicer than it was at first.

Anna and Mr. Breunner and I got the supper for our section, in the enforced absence of the cook. We did not know where anything was, and John had to pick the dishes up out of the grass. They were scattered far and wide. We filled our eyes with smoke, and Mr. Breunner stepped backward into the pail of hot coffee and burned his foot, and Hiram scolded us for throwing out the coffee. "You girls are that finicky and wasteful," he said — and the pancakes were so peppered with flying dirt that we had to smother them with molasses in order to eat them; but I doubt if we ever went to a party that we enjoyed half so much. Anna would be glad if Mr. Williams were disabled for a week, just so we could go on with the cooking.

The boys built up a bush shelter against the wagons, and near to the fire, and we wrapped ourselves in blankets and sat with our toes in the warm ashes, listening to stories the men were telling.

Haines suddenly turned to John and asked what had happened between him and Downing. John had not mentioned it, but Haines had heard of it from the Captain. John replied that last night when he had been doing guard-duty, he had taken Downing, under arrest, to the Captain.

"You know it was the first time that they have let me go on guard. Naturally you don't feel any too easy in your mind when you know there are Indians around, and you are walking up and down in the dark, and the grass whispers 'sh-sh-sh' on every side of you, and you see something move out in the bushes, and you have got to walk up to it, bold as brass. It is only a paper blowing in the wind, — but the next time maybe it will be an Indian, creeping up on you! And then you are sure that you do see someone sneaking along, and you look and look, — and you know it is a person! That is the way it was last night. Don't you think I wasn't scared! My knees had kinks in them so I could not stand up straight, and I lost my breath for three minutes! I don't know how it was I happened to think of the Captain, just then, but I did, and the thought of him kind of braced me up; and I found that I could walk, and raise my gun, and I cried out, 'Who goes there?' It sounded queer — lots louder than I meant to say it, but I

said it! And the man dropped behind a bush, till he heard the click of my gun; then he got up and came to me, and laughed as if it was a joke on me! It was Downing.

"He said he heard the stock thrashing around as if there were something wrong, and he got up to see about it, — but that did not explain about his not answering me when I first spoke to him. He tried to laugh me out of taking him to the Captain, but I told him that was the orders. The Captain gave him a sharp reprimand, and told him that the reprimand would have been for me if I had not done as I did. And Downing is mad at me yet, but that makes no difference to me when the Captain thinks I am right."

I think John did well, — and it was all the braver because he was really afraid, inside, and never let Downing guess it. The boy is growing so manly, and he seems so well. But Franz Bach and the Deacon are saying that he ought to stay out in this western country for a year at least. I think they are planning for him to go with Ernst Breunner, into Mexico.

If John goes to Mexico, and Anna stays with Hiram in Santa Fé, and I have to go back home in the caravan, without either of them ——

CHAPTER XXI

WHEN KNIGHTS RODE OUT IN TOURNAMENT

SATURDAY the wind was again blowing in furious gusts, and the temper of the teams was all upset; they were restless and fractious, and, as the men said, "The whole *caballada* were ready for a general *estampeda*."

The Spanish sounds no more strange to our ears. Twank has a fancy for speaking it altogether, though half the time we have to guess at his meaning. There are a hundred convenient catch-phrases that have insinuated themselves into our every-day speech, and we use them without thinking whether they are English or Spanish — *¿Quien sabe? No sabe! ¿Cómo está V? Buenos días! Buenas noches! Si, señor! No, señor! No es posible!* — and the like.

Our oxen are American, Missouri bred and born, but they have learned the Spanish, too! When they get into difficulties the men urge them to their best endeavors by volleys of blistering Spanish oaths,

— a goad as effective as the whips that are laid upon them so mercilessly.

John and I are so fond of the oxen that belong to us, the ones that draw our wagons. They are such beautiful creatures, and seem so faithful and dependable. Yesterday morning — Saturday morning — I was walking along with them, smoothing their sleek sides, talking the pretty complimentary talk that they like to hear, and quieting them, when they tossed their heads and snuffed the gusty air. The loads seemed more than they could pull, and they sighed and groaned, and dragged their feet, and I told them it was a shame to overtask them so, and I hated the men who cracked their whips at them.

Coming to a little creek, I went back and climbed into the carriage. Lucky I did! I would have been left miles behind if I had not. When the first of the teams went down into the creek-bed, a flock of cranes flew up almost under their noses, and they snorted and bellowed, and started up the bank at a crazy gallop, and they frightened all the other teams, and our heavy wagons were jerked along through deep gullies and up steep slopes. And after the mad race was brought to an end, the "dear, dependable, patient things" looked as abused as if the drivers had been to blame for the extra work that they had put upon themselves!

One of the wagons came gaily sailing along upon three wheels. Several others were half emptied of their contents. Stray boxes and bales of goods had to be looked up and repacked. And altogether we had to make a five-hour stop in the middle of the day.

I think it must have been Friday night when a band of wild horses crossed the trail before the camp; and Franz Bach and Downing and some of the others went out after them, and brought in five. And now, while the caravan was waiting, they took advantage of the time to "break the horses in." The phrase is exactly the right one, — they do "break" them, — break their will, and almost kill them, to conquer them.

It must be a frightful thing for a free wild creature to find itself with a heavy saddle tightly cinched on its body, to feel a crooked, cramping, breaking bar of iron in its mouth, and to have to carry upon its back the weight of a savage monster, who stabs it in the flank with sharp spurs, cuts its skin into open, bleeding welts with the lash of a quirt, and beats it over the head with the loaded handle. It is no wonder that the four-legged brute tries to kill the one who so assaults him.

I can only suppose that this is quite the usual

procedure, for the men showed no anger or surprise while Downing was practising these cruelties.

I asked Ernst Breunner if such brutality were necessary — if my pretty Aguilita had been so mistreated. His blue eyes showed dangerous sparks in them as he answered.

"No! Indeed, no! Such treatment is barbarous, and a positive damage to the horse. If the animal is a creature of spirit, it will be ready to renew the contest whenever it feels a weak or incompetent hand upon the rein. Horses are naturally kindly and intelligent, ready to meet man half-way if only he gains their confidence and trust in the beginning. Whip and spurs are unnecessary, to 'gentle' a horse."

Downing had dismounted and was standing near us, wiping the sweat from his brow with a bloody hand. There was an ugly sneer upon his lips.

"Well, that sounds right pretty — it's as much as you know about it! Them that knows 'broncs' knows you can't break 'em that way. I'd like to see you try out your fine notions on that there red roan, — the one that Bach is getting ready to ride. You'd be in the dust, and have your insides kicked out of you in no time!"

Ernst's cheeks could not but flush at the tone which Downing saw fit to use, but he showed no other sign of annoyance. He spoke to Franz Bach.

"Take that saddle off, and give me a straight bit, and I will ride your roan for you." Bach looked at him in surprise, but seeing that he meant what he said, he ordered the boys to bring a bridle with an easy bar-bit.

Though Mr. Breunner had ridden with us often, John and I had no idea that he was horseman enough to ride and break a wild horse of the plains, — and now he was stripping off coat and vest, making ready for the encounter! There were no preliminaries. With a bold leap he was on the horse's back — without saddle or whip or spurs! Downing was prophesying evil, but we gave no thought to him! we had only eyes and thoughts for Ernst Breunner and the big roan.

The horse was an intelligent creature, whose first effort, when he found a strange and unwelcome burden on his back, was to rid himself of it. Nature had taught him a thousand tricks — to rear, to plunge, to jump in the air and dodge sidewise before his feet touched the earth, to buck and buck, fiercely and continuously.

Ernst kept his place through all of it with apparent ease; and in every pause he spoke to the animal in soothing tones, his hand patting and smoothing the silky neck.

The roan must have come to the conclusion that

there was nothing dangerous or disagreeable about this burden that had fixed itself upon his back. Run? Surely he could run! His head was gently turned and he found himself running in a circle. Well, why not? Yes, he could turn the other way, this way and that, — could slow down, and stop, and run and turn again. It was rather nice to have one's neck rubbed and patted, — rather nice to be talked to, — something to be proud of that they two should understand each other so well.

In shorter time than one would have thought it possible, the splendid creature was answering to the rein, and then Ernst rode up and gravely saluted our Captain, as if he were taking part in a royal review.

To the big horse this seemed a good time to further try the quality of his rider. With a plunge and a rush he was off! But Ernst looked back and smiled with the gay unconcern of one who is sure of his power to control. In the olden times, when knights rode in tournament, there never was figure more spirited, more knightly, more worthy of admiration!

I may have looked at Captain Harrod inquiringly, for he answered the question that was in my mind.

"Ernst Breunner, when he was a *Gymnasien* student, gave a full year, as all Germans are obliged

to do, to military service. That he was a member of the German cavalry, partly accounts for his skill, but he has the natural gift for horsemanship, besides."

My eyes were following the two. The roan was running wildly free, as if at the head of his band. He came to a sudden stop, and went through all the repertoire of his tricks again, — but now it was with a different spirit, as if they were playing a wild rough game together. Then they returned to us at an easy gallop.

Franz Bach was delighted, and he called out:

"Hi, dere! You Mr. Sherman-Professor-mans! Coom oop here, und dell us how dot trick vos done! Id vos a pity dot you nod own dot horse, now aindt it?"

And upon that hint Mr. Breunner spoke, offering him a price that was at once accepted. The roan had a new master! John scurried off and was back in a moment with our ponies, Barnaby and Aguilita, and we tried the paces of the three together. They went along very well, but Aguilita is, I am sure, much the swiftest!

After six days of travel we were glad when we woke this morning to know that this is Rest-day. It is not possible for the men to observe the Sabbath

in a very orthodox fashion, but they know that it is different from the other days of the week, and that it is better than to disregard it utterly as most of the caravans do.

Danny and Ernst and John and I went for a long ride this morning. The men were glad to be rid of us, for they purposed to have a "good cleaning-up spell." They went swimming, and borrowed a keg of soft-soap from the cook to do their weekly washing with; and they washed their clothes, and scrubbed their faces, and trimmed their beards, and decked themselves out in whatever finery they were possessed of — fancy belts and gay bandannas — so they were hardly to be recognized. And they were playing all sorts of games when we returned — throwing tomahawks, shooting at targets, pitching horse-shoes, and playing "crack-a-lou." A few were simply gossiping and telling stories.

Danny, who likes to have something doing all the time, proposed that to-night his Division should entertain all the others. Everybody was invited and everybody came.

Anna and John and I helped to serve the sweet crackers and raisins, the boys carried the baskets of sandwiches, and Rob and Hiram managed the big coffee-pots.

The men were very conscious that this was a

"party," and they hushed their laughter, lest it should be too loud, and ate and drank in polite moderation, remembering their "manners." Altogether they were making it a rather stiff and not over-enjoyable occasion, when Twank began to play on his squeaky little fiddle the tunes that they were familiar with, and then they began to feel more at ease, and soon they were all singing and having the best of times.

There are many among them who cannot read, and for those who can, there are no newspapers or books. The time would hang heavy on their hands if each one did not take it upon himself to help entertain the others. They are capital story-tellers, and they are all of them singers, and they give themselves up to the spell of the music with a whole-hearted enthusiasm that gives to their rudest ballads something of charm and power.

I remember a part of one of their songs, called "The Battle of Point Pleasant."

"Let us mind the tenth day of October,
Seventy-four, which caused woe.
The Indian savages they did cover
The pleasant banks of the Ohio.

"Colonel Lewis and some noble Captains,
Did down to death like Uriah go.
Alas! their heads are bound up with napkins,
Upon the banks of the Ohio.

"Seven score lay dead and wounded,
Of champions who did face the foe;
By which the heathen were confounded,
Upon the banks of the Ohio.

"Oh, bless the mighty King of Heaven,
For all his wondrous works below,
Who hath to us the victory given,
Upon the banks of the Ohio."

It is easy enough to criticize the poetry, but when two hundred strong voices unite in singing it to the tune of "Bonnie Doon" there seems nothing in it that one would wish to change. And when they swung off into the chorus of "The Song of the West," my heart thrilled within me as it had never thrilled to music before.

"To the West, to the West! to the land of the free,
Where the mighty Missouri rolls down to the sea!"

It was like the roar of a great organ, when all the stops are pulled out; and as if it had been an invocation or a summons, when the last verse was sung, the round-eyed moon slowly rose above the distant hazy line of the horizon. Where before had been soft gloom, dimly lighted by the flickering fire, was now a dazzling crystal radiance, that flooded all the plain.

In this new light I looked upon the men grouped about us, and they were not as I had seen them day

by day. I saw them as those who are yet to be born will see them! They are Heroes, — the *Conquerors of the Wilderness!*

They are like the mighty men of old, the men of whom Ossian sang, — men strong and courageous, born with a feverish unrest in their hearts, with a divine frenzy in their souls, that urges them ever to tread out for themselves the new strange pathway. All the obstacles that Nature puts in their way are to them as nothing. Seas may not stay them, nor forests affright, nor deserts dismay!

Bold and rough and daring they are, but they know what gentleness and tenderness mean. With Hiram and Danny they sang the old songs that we all know, sang them as if they loved them, — "Annie Laurie," "The Light Canoe," "O Come, Maidens, Come," and "Auld Lang Syne."

And someone began the hymn, "Come Thou Fount," and all were singing, — only I could not sing with them. There were tears upon my cheeks, and my throat was choked, and my heart was filled with thoughts of home. It was the time for family prayers, and father and mother and the girls would be singing together ——

CHAPTER XXII

"A MILLION IN A BUNCH"

OUR hunters have been grieving and sighing because of the absence of the usual buffalo herds on the plain. There will be no more sighing on that account! They have seen all of that sort of game they will care to see for some little time! There were millions — literally millions — of buffalo in the herd that crossed the trail yesterday.

Bloody battle, — shipwreck, — earthquake, — tornado! We experienced the sensations that belong to all of them.

It must have been an hour after the caravan had left the camp that we had the first warning of their approach. John and Ernst and I were riding leisurely along at the side of the wagons when we heard a faint indescribable sound — like the roaring of a distant Niagara, — and the ground was trembling beneath our feet!

Uncle Pliny rushed up, and unceremoniously thrust John from his horse, and mounted and rode up to the crest of a little swell not far from the track, to the north. As he went he called back:

"It's buffalo — buffalo! An almighty big herd of 'em. It cain't be nothin' else!"

Mr. Breunner and I rode after him at a gallop. Along the whole breadth of the level plain, from the eastern to the western horizon line, there appeared a solid bank of dark rolling dust! It came on at breakneck speed — a solid mass of buffalo, a stampeded herd!

"Good Lord deliver us! They will be onto us before ever we can get ready to face 'em!"

We wheeled to dash back to the wagons, and heard the bugle's shrill call; saw the wagons advancing, saw them take their position in a long sharply pointed "V," with the point toward the on-coming herd. Two howitzers were run out far in advance, with groups of picked experienced old plainsmen to keep the front. We waited to see no more, but with one backward glance fled to cover.

The stock was hobbled and made fast between the double line of wagons. Hiram seized me and tossed me up among the bales of goods by the side of Anna.

"Lordy, Lordy! If we get through this with our lives 'twill be nothin' less than a miracle! Now then, you girls, you lie right there, and don't you budge, whatever happens, — whatever you may see or hear!" — and he was gone.

The sound of the trampling hoofs was like thunder — only a hundred times more dreadful than ever thunder sounded. We heard the roar of the big howitzers, the sharp report of the rifles, round after round.

After many minutes of agonizing suspense, Anna's stiff lips whispered, "I believe they're passing us!" And they were rushing by us — outside of the wagon lines. Our front must have held firm against them. Yet as they rushed by us, some of the animals crowded us so close, as to almost overturn the wagon where we lay!

Uncle Pliny came back after another box of ammunition, and stopped to tell us how the battle was going.

"You can bet that we done the trick! We're 'bout the same as safe, though, I take it. Not but what they're still a-comin' — an' likely to keep on a-comin' fur all day. But the bunch is putty well divided, an' they'll keep on a-swingin' furder an' furder apart. The biggest herd I ever see — an' I've been twenty year travelin' this region. It didn't look like they could be a wedge that could split 'em, they was packed that solid! An' comin' like a avalanche down a mountain slide! It were the howitzers that done it — dropped 'em by hunderds, piled 'em in a heap, a nasty slippery heap

that the next ones stumbled on, an' couldn't climb, — an' them that was behind tromped them that was in front, an' the pile grew bigger ever' second, an' the bangin' an' the roar frightened 'em, so the nigh ones sort o' turned an' crowded to one side. The split were started, an' then all we had to do was to keep on shootin' like blazes. But they was a good spell when it looked like nip-an'-tuck with us, an' as if it was us that'd be the ones to be nipped an' tuckered! Them there boys got plum crazy, an' they pot-shotted right an' left, too keerless to see where they were aimin', an' they putty nigh fetched me — got the whiskers off one side of my face!"

His face was powder burned and his whiskers were singed, but his whole air was one of jubilation as he pottered away, back to where the shooting was fiercest.

We sat up and looked about us. The herd was divided and turning further and further from the wagons. As soon as there was a safe clear space beside us the butchers got to work. Poles were set up, ropes were strung, and soon long, flaky strips of the choicest and tenderest part of the young beeves were hanging out a-drying in the sun.

It was long after our usual dinner hour when Ernst and John came up to tell us that they were starved for something to eat, and dying also from

thirst. Where Mr. Williams was no one seemed to know, so Anna and I scrambled up a dinner — after we had satisfied ourselves that these people were really not strangers and wild men! Indeed, we could not be sure we knew them, they were so ragged, and bloody, and dirty, and disheveled!

Their breath was coming in gasps, their faces were flushed red under the dirt, their eyes shining with the excitement of battle. Ernst's thick blond locks were tousled and tumbled over his brow, his sleeves were stiff with blood, where they were not fringed into tatters, and John was in as sad a plight. They were young gladiators from a Roman arena! It had been "glorious sport," but they were glad enough to rest, and to eat and drink. How many cupfuls of coffee they tossed down their throats, how many helpings of meat and gravy and flapjacks they had, Anna and I are not telling.

It was impossible for us to move from the place where we had set camp, for there were still too many buffalo along the route we would have to take. It was not until sunset that the wagons could again take the trail. Where the herd had passed there was no vestige of greenness left. The land was bare as a stretch of desert, — and there were heaps on heaps of dead buffalo lying everywhere around us. It was revolting, nauseating, but we did not

forget to be thankful that the caravan had suffered no injury.

"It's likely enough that we could a-saved our lives," Uncle Pliny said, "a-puttin' ourselves inside the doubled wagons chained like they was; but if the Captain hadn't been jest so smart and sharp about it we never'd saved our critters — they'd a-gone a-kitin' with them there buffalo, an' where would we a-been then? We'd be a-walkin' back to Westport, carryin' what little food we could tote, an' our guns an' am'nition, an' runnin' our chance with the Injuns if we should meet 'em!

"They was somethin' like that done happened to a pack-train, years ago, down by the Caches. Their stock was all stampeded, an' they couldn't carry their goods nowhere without beasts to do it with, so they made plans to hide 'em, — an' they had to hide 'em mighty keerful, so's the Injuns wouldn't surmise nothin'. Them being camped close to the river, like they was, gave them an extry chanst. They dug three deep holes, big enough to hold everything, an' they put their goods in 'em, and kivered 'em up. Then they waded out into the river and carried and dumped ever' mite o' dirt what come out o' them holes in the water, so the piles o' dirt wouldn't be there to show that holes had been dug. They done it all so crafty — plantin' cactus an' bay'net-

plants, an' walkin' back'ard, an' coverin' up their tracks with sifted sand and loose stones an' all. The sharpest eyed Injun wouldn't never guess they'd been a white man's foot there — let alone leavin' their goods there, — an' they walked back to Independence, an' got another lot o' pack-mules, an' come back to their caches. An' that's why people still calls it the 'Caches,' you know, — an' their goods was all right an' they loaded of 'em up, an' took 'em on to Santa Fé. They called themselves right lucky, but even at that it were not an experience that one'd hanker for. An' I'm a-sayin' that we-alls can count ourselves most oncommon lucky that the same as that didn't happen to us in that there stampede!"

After spending so many days out in the glaring sunshine, it seems heavenly sweet to spend one idle day in the cool shade of the trees here at Walnut Creek. It must have rained here, the day we had that wind-storm at Little Turkey Creek, the foliage looks so fresh and green, and there is a damp woodsy odor in the air, that makes me think of home; and there are ferns in the deep shady wet places under the rocks, and there are flowers blossoming everywhere.

The great Arkansas river is in sight. It is a wide,

wide stream, with little islands covered with a young growth of cottonwood trees dotting its surface. Across the river are hills of yellow sand, rolling back like waves of gold. On this side of the river the banks are low and marshy. Shallow pools and lakelets gleam blue between the tall rushes.

Flocks of crane! Plover in innumerable squads! Ducks in black clouds overhead! The men are thinking of nothing else than the hunting. All day we have been hearing the sound of guns. Enthusiastic sportsmen as they are, they did not go out of sight and hearing of the camp. They understand very well that this is within the line marked "dangerous." These broad fields — rich in game — are the favorite "stamping grounds" of the Indians from north and south and east and west. They come here to hunt, to hold their friendly powwows, — and to fight, — so our men are well satisfied to keep within sound of the company's bugles.

Some of the more experienced have greater freedom. They ride on ahead of the train, to find the best place for camping, and to look for signs of danger. They have the best horses in the train; they go equipped with extra arms and ammunition; and they carry spy-glasses or telescopes, so it would not be easy to take them by surprise.

Ernst Breunner is one of the specially favored

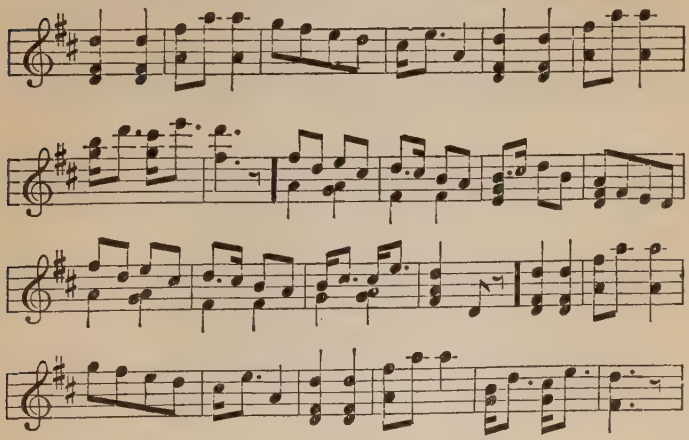
ones; he comes and goes much as he pleases. Since we were at Council Grove, he has been making something like a regular survey of the country through which we are passing, — noting the geological formation, the changing elevation above sea-level, the height of the hills, the depth and course of the streams, etc.

Deacon Gentry and John have decided it between them that John is to go to Mexico, and Mr. Breunner is giving him instruction in mensuration and surveying. To-morrow morning they are going on ahead of the caravan to "Pawnee Rock," to explore it, take measurements, and make notes.

I am wild to go with them, but no one has suggested that I do so. "Pawnee Rock" is an enormous red-sandstone boulder or bluff, a hundred or more feet in height, rising solitary and majestic (a western Sphinx) above the level of the plain. Sphinx-like it keeps its own counsel. It does not unclose its lips to speak of the thousand direful tragedies and thrilling romances that have been enacted under its gaze.

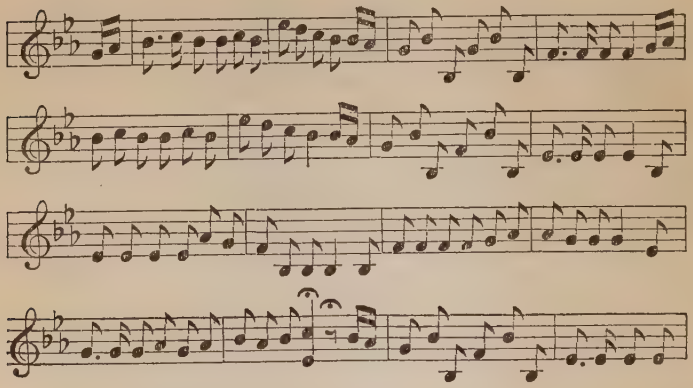
It does not need to speak, for there are men to speak for it. They have garnered up scores of legends that they recite with telling effect at night — when the fire burns low, and the wolf-chorus sounds in our ears.

All the noted people who have crossed the plains, for hundreds of years, have stopped to visit this famous landmark, and many have carved their names there in the rock — the Boones, and Davy Crockett, and Colonel Bowie, and Kit Carson; and there are old, old, Spanish names, and Indian hieroglyphics! And I want to go and see it all for myself. And maybe I will! If John goes, I do truly think I ought to go, to look after him. That is what father sent me out on the plains to do!



Big Rob is amusing himself and the men around him, doing the Sword-dance and the Highland-fling. He is agile and supple, and light on his feet as a sixteen-year-old girl. The men are hugely interested in the lively performance, and in his efforts

at singing! His voice booms out like one of our big guns. It is enough to make one more than a little excited and light-headed, and rashly disposed to undertake any deed of daring, to hear him roar out the inspiring strains of "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled" and the warlike "Bonnie Dundee,"



"Come fill up my cup, and fill up my can!
Come saddle my horses and call up my men!
Unhook the west port, and let us gae free,
For it's 'Up wi' the bonnets o' bonnie Dundee'!"

CHAPTER XXIII

SQUAW TOGGERY

IT was still dark, with only a ghostly hint of dawn in the sky, when John tapped with his whip on the curtains.

"Do you hear me, Deya? We are off to Pawnee Rock! Such a pity you can't go with us!"

I murmured a sleepy response to this belated indefinite invitation, and he never knew that I was already up and dressing — getting ready to accept it! A freakish, foolish notion possessed me. If I had not been half-asleep I would not have entertained it for an instant, but just then I fancied it would be "smart" to masquerade as an Indian and play at capturing my dear brother. I suppose seeing the squaw suit hanging there put the notion in my head; but at any rate, I dressed myself in the deerskin garments, — moccasins, leggings, skirt, and jacket. I even debated whether I might not wear the eagle-feather head-dress, but compromised with myself by tying a red sash around my "jetty braided locks," and sticking a single feather therein.

Mr. Williams had been up for a long time, getting breakfast for the early risers, and he poured out my coffee and fixed up a lunch for me. Half an hour after John and Ernst had quitted camp I was on my way. A white mist was lying low upon the prairie, so I did not see them till I was almost upon them, and they did not notice me till I gave my best imitation of a wild war-whoop, and dashed down upon them. For a moment they were startled, and then John answered me in kind, and, tossing his hand in derision, he urged Barnaby into a run. The roan horse, Zeppa, was swifter than Barnaby, but my little Aguilita could outrun them both. I passed them, and drew up in the middle of the road to bring them to a stop. And then I had a shame-faced explanation to make. I knew that I ought not to have gone out of camp without permission, and I felt foolish in my silly masquerade. But John was nice about it, and said the suit made "a bully riding costume," — and when I knew he thought it was all right I was satisfied.

Our ponies pulled at their bits, and fretted when we tried to rein them in. They eyed each other askance, and begged that we would let them try their mettle in another good race. It was glorious, our flight through the dew-wet grasses.

A softened silvery sun, a pale sweet wraith of

itself, showed through the veil of mist. The wind came up, the white fog lifted, the sun glowed like a ball of golden fire, and every dewdrop jewel, on every blade of grass, twinkled and trembled and flashed and sparkled, till one could fancy that the plain was bestrewn with diamonds and emeralds and seed-pearls.

Pawnee Rock lay there before us. We dismounted and threw our ponies' bridle-reins over their heads — they have learned not to stray away when the lines are left to trail on the ground — and before setting about our tasks, we sat down to eat the lunch that I had brought. Ernst and John were glad enough that I was with them, firstly because I had brought something to eat, and the ride in the morning air had made them hungry as bears, and secondly because I could explore the upper rocks and copy the inscriptions while they were busy with their instruments and their "logarithms" and such.

The big rock was not perpendicular, even in the steepest place. There were crannies for footholds, and knobby projections to hold by, so if one kept a steady head it was possible to climb almost to the very top of the cliff.

I had a little note-book of my own, and carried one of Ernst's, and in these I set down everything that I thought might have interest or value. I put

down the inscriptions just as they were, even though I did not know what they meant — some of them were worse than Greek to me. I wondered if a Spaniard would be able to read them. One bore the date 1630.

I found a queer figure carved in the rock under one of the overhanging ledges. I am sure it was meant for the royal eagle that is to bring Montezuma the king back to his waiting people. All the Indians of the Southwest, and especially those of the Pecos tribe, are still expecting the great Montezuma to return and reign over them, though it is two centuries since he vanished so mysteriously from the face of the earth.

The idea struck me that this bird, and the "Piasa-bird" painted on the bluff at Alton, may be representations of the same object. Perhaps some one of Montezuma's followers may have crossed the plains toward the Kingdom of the East, and painted and carved these strange figures on the bold headlands as a sign and token to their sovereign that his people had not forgotten him. Or it may be they were meant to mark the trail from the land of the rising sun to the valley of the Pecos.

I found a convenient niche in the rocks where I could sit and trace the drawings in my book.

I closed the book and rose to go, and my hand lay upon the place where *Kit Carson's* name was cut! Pawnee Rock is like the "visitor's book" in an inn, where every guest inscribes his name. There was a particularly smooth bit of stone near Kit Carson's name, and if I had thought that he would ever return and look up his record there I would have written the word "Deya" and the date, just by way of greeting.

There were other inscriptions to be examined, and I reached up and clung to a ragged knob of stone, as I tried to find a safe place to set my foot, — and the rock came loose in my hands! I slipped downward till my feet struck a jutting ledge and my hands caught in a prickly bush that grew there. Everything turned black before my eyes. Even after I had given myself a little time to recover I could not bring myself to think of making the descent alone. I saw John on the slope around at the left, and I called to him to come and help me, — and he thought I was just pretending that I was afraid, for he laughed and shook his head, and pointed to the instrument that he was using. But there was the fact, — he refused to come to me, — and I flared up angry in an instant, and I made up my mind that I would come down that rock, right then, if I broke my neck doing it!

I suppose it took just that flash of temper to nerve me for the task. I swung down the dangerous places with never a slip, till I was at the very bottom, and then — I must have grown careless, or a stone turned under my foot — the rest of the way I came with a rush, and I would have gone headlong had not Mr. Breunner appeared. I do not know how he caught me — I did not know anything for a time, and it was only by degrees that the consciousness came to me that he was holding me, and murmuring all sorts of endearing phrases that were evidently intended for me, for there was no one else to hear!

I just hated it! I think he might have waited till he found out whether I wanted him to or not, before he used lovers' language to me! If I had answered him then, he would have known I was angry, — and I felt so foolish. If John had come to help me as I wanted him to, this would not have happened. Aguilita was within call, and in a minute I was on her back, and riding swift as she could carry me, back along the way that I had come, back to meet the caravan.

And then I thought how silly I had been, and I laughed and turned my pony again toward Pawnee Rock. I could just pretend that I had not heard what he had said, and everything would be as if it had not happened.

Aguilita and I made our way by a roundabout path to the top of the bluff, and there I waited for John and Ernst to finish their work. The wind was blowing, pure and fine and strong, and it blew all my troublesome thoughts away before it. I looked upon the lovely landscape with real joy. With the glass that I carried I watched the caravan crawling slowly across the plain. I thought I could distinguish the Captain and Danny and Stoneman, riding in advance, and I knew the blue bit of gauze fluttering from one of the distant wagons was Anna's veil.

Except for the caravan there was no living creature in sight — no birds in the sky, — no antelope, wolves or coyotes. I turned the glass to the northwest, — there was something like a threat of storm, a low dark cloud, a dust cloud, a gleam of color, a flash of light. I held the glass steady, and then I knew! Indians! Indians with banners and spears! "A war-party!" I screamed frantically to Ernst and John, and pointed to the west. They climbed up beside me, and Ernst took the glass. After one searching look, he sent me back to warn the caravan, while they stayed where they were, to watch the movements of the approaching Indians.

My swift "Little Eagle" spread her wings and flew over the ground. Those at the head of the

caravan saw my signals — and understood the danger that threatened us! I heard the fierce yelling of the drivers, the crack of the whips like pistol-shots, the creak and groaning of the wagons.

Four lines abreast, the teams were coming on at full gallop, the lines straight, and all in perfect order. At the bugle signal the outside lines drew apart and increased their speed. They were the first to reach the rock, and they turned and swung in toward each other to form a semi-circle, with the eastern face of the rock as a base. The oxen were unhitched and hobbled and tied safely inside. By this time the other Divisions had arrived and taken position close on the outside — a double line of wagons with a wall at the back, and a little flowing spring of water in the center, a fortress all but impregnable to an Indian attack.

Bales of blankets and buffalo robes were piled along the ground, under the wagons, and behind this bulwark the expert riflemen were stationed. The howitzers were outside of all, their big mouths an open threat of Death, that even the most reckless of warriors would not dare to disregard.

There was half an hour of inaction, — half an hour of suspense. It seemed an age! It was almost a relief to hear the first shrill whoop that told us that the Indians had at last discovered us. They

filled the plain to the south; they wheeled in a mass and charged full upon us, — two thousand yelling Cheyenne braves!

With head-dresses streaming in the wind, spears brandished, ready for the casting, with horrid cries, sharp and blood-curdling, they threatened to ride us down — into us and over us. I thought that I might die from fright before ever they reached us, but I got my revolver and cartridges ready to my hand, and I determined that if I lived long enough I would shoot six bullets anyway into that crowd of yelling demoniacs.

But our people were ready for them. I heard the click of their gunlocks, — and then the Indians suddenly wheeled away just before coming into rifle-range. In solid mass, they bore down upon us again, with still more frightful and deafening cries, and again they turned away as before.

We who were hidden behind the wagon curtains could see that their keen glances were taking in every detail of our defense — the big-mouthed cannon, the barricades, the hundreds of rifles ready to reply to the singing of their arrows. And there was our Captain to be reckoned with. He was standing by the side of his horse, alone, out in front, regarding their every movement, undismayed by their most alarming demonstrations.

The third time that they wheeled by us, they assumed a gay instead of a hostile attitude, and their cries were pitched in a slightly different key. They drew up in close ranks, beyond range of our guns, and waited to see what we would do.

Captain Harrod seized the opportunity as soon as it was offered. Grave and quiet in manner, but with a superb air of confidence, he rode out to meet them, not even showing the raised hand — the sign of amity — till he was well within arrow-shot.

The eyes of all the Indians were turned upon him, but they made no sign. When he was within a few rods of them he drew rein and waited, busying himself with the filling of his pipe, preparatory to lighting it.

In all our camp no one dared to speak or breathe, until we saw the young chief riding out to meet the Captain. Then Danny gave a sob of relief, and the words burst from him, "Bully for Captain Harrod! He's done the trick." The tears gushed from my eyes — tears of pride for our Captain's splendid courage, and tears of thankfulness.

A few of the lesser dignitaries among the Indians pressed forward to join their chief, and it was plainly the duty of our Lieutenants to go to the support of our Captain. Aljoe and Haines and Stoneman and Danny were in their saddles in an

instant. A gap was opened between the wagons for them to pass.

Just as they started, reckless Danny called to me, "Come on, Deya! There is no danger! The Captain has got the conjur-spell on them!" He held up his hand, making the "let's-play-hookey" sign, and I threw up my hand, in answering signal. John giggled with delight, and we three scrambled on our ponies and rode out of the gap, after the others, wickedly aware of the fact that if the Captain did disapprove of our presence, he would never dare to send us back.

The palaver between the two parties was peaceable enough. The chief assured us that his people had put on the war-paint for their enemies the Arapahoes — the treacherous Arapahoes, who under the guise of friends had misused them, stealing their horses and carrying off their women. To the white man their intentions were altogether brotherly! Their warlike actions were designed only to give pleasure to the brave men who formed our company. They were practising the maneuvers by which they hoped to terrify the cowardly Arapahoes. Was it not a brave picture they made? If the white brothers were pleased, perhaps they would make some little present of tobacco or "hoggy-meat" or other trifle?

The Captain replied that he had already planned to bestow many gifts upon them, and he gave orders to Aljoe and Stoneman to ride back and bring out the bundles of goods that were waiting.

There was nothing for us to do but sit by and wait, — inwardly watchful and anxious, outwardly careless and indifferent.

All at once it came to me — I had not thought of it before — that I was not dressed exactly as a white maiden should be! And then it was that I wished myself anywhere but there — the center of regard for those bold, piercing glances, that burned into me like points of flame. Uncle Pliny, who had come out to act as interpreter, was busy talking with two of the youngest chiefs, and I thought he was explaining about me, and my presence there. I looked down upon my squaw toggery in disgust! A big lump was in my throat, — and I know that wretch of a Danny was enjoying my discomfiture.

But I resolutely kept my gaze toward the camp, and saw a score of our men coming out with bundles of goods — tobacco, and red-cloth, and strips of "hoggy-meat." There was a splendid necklace of shining brass medals for "Broke-nose," the sturdy young chief, who was not stoical enough to repress the visible signs of his satisfaction. The goods were seized upon, and then, abruptly, as if they really

were in haste to overtake their Arapahoe enemies, the whole band rode away to the northeast. I am sure they never guessed how glad we were to see them go!

I knew that I would get a scolding from someone for my reckless escapade; but it was not until suppertime that Deacon Gentry said:

"I do not understand the headstrong and foolish young people of to-day, — and I must say I am disappointed in you, Deya, you, the daughter of Squire Randall. You knew you were transgressing the rules of the camp when you left it this morning without permission. It is not a good example that you are setting for your brother. You might well look to Hiram's wife for a pattern of what a young woman should be. She is comely, sedate, and gentle: no harum-scarum, to don a squaw's garments and go scampering off, breakneck style, to get into no one knows what difficulties and troubles. I will expect you to give me your word that from henceforth you will conform to the regulations that govern the others."

But Uncle Pliny came to my defense.

"Oh, shucks, Deacon! They's a difference in girls, same as they is in boys. 'Tisn't in the nater o' things that she should be like Hiram's wife, ef she tried to. It's all right for her to be herself!

An' I'll say right here she don't need no scolding for to-day's work, — that she don't. You don't none o' you seem to reelize the good she done us by that thar mischief-notion of her'n this morning.

"It's a altogether sure-enough fac' that ef she hadn't run away, an' ef she hadn't been on the top o' this here Rock, a-lookin' out with her spy-glass jest when she was, an' ef she hadn't warned us, we'd a been in a pretty kittle o' fish! Them Injuns 'd a done us whatever o' harm they could. I know 'em of old! Ef they'd a got to this place afore we did, they ain't no tellin' where we'd a been now. An' as for her a-follerin' out thar whar them Injuns was — she couldn't a done nothin' better, ef she'd set an' planned it for a week! Young 'Broke-nose' was jest a-waitin', not knowin' edzackly what he did dare to do, when out she rides in that Indian rig, an' they was stunned for a minute — they said so. They didn't know what to think, an' then they was plum tickled, it was so cheeky an' smart! For all you know, or anyone knows, that thar might've been the feather that turned the scale! You can't tell 'bout little seemingly-foolish things, what big results come from them sometimes! An' this I do know, that it didn't do no hurt. An' you are not to be a-frettin' 'bout it no more, Miss Deya — 'though the Deacon ain't so fur wrong, neither.

'Twas resky, an' they ain't no call for you-uns to be a-runnin' yourselves into danger, — so you hearken to the Deacon, an' don't you do no sech thing agin!"

Harshness is not half so effective in the way of reproof as kindness is. Uncle Pliny's gentleness made me realize the extent of my misdoing — of my insubordination. If it did all turn out for the best, it was not at all because of me, nor was it just chance. It was the beneficent hand of an overruling Providence. "He maketh the wrath of man to praise him," and the foolishness of a child he turneth to account!

Taps are sounding, — and my obedient candle goes out! Heaven guard us, this night!

CHAPTER XXIV

A QUESTION NOT ANSWERED

LAST night, after one of the gayest and liveliest evenings we have had in camp, I cried myself to sleep. I was homesick. I wanted my sisters around me as of old. I wanted mother to draw me close and smooth my hair. All night I dreamed of home-folks. When I woke my first breath was a sigh; and all day the quick-starting tears have bothered me, at any inopportune time — at the table, and when folks are joking and laughing about funny happenings, that do not seem funny to me.

I have spent most of this day quietly here in the carriage, writing, and trying to draw the picture of the house at home. I can see it as it is this very minute, with the sun going down behind the big twin oak-trees, and the red of the sky shining bright through the delicate foliage of the young maples; the house with wings at the sides and the double porches in front, all pearly white, set in the greenery of trees and lawn; the row of bee-hives along the path that leads down to the spring-branch; the

orchard and garden, shut in by the moss-covered rail-fence; and mother and the girls there picking strawberries for Sunday supper.

I remember, when we were all little tads, how we children used to climb up on the bench in the wash-house, to look at ourselves in the old cracked and wavy mirror that hung there; how we looked and laughed at the ridiculously distorted faces that were reflected there, laughed just for the fun of laughing, as children do. Our vanity was never hurt in the least by the funny reflections that we saw. We knew that the crookedness and the queerness was all the fault of the mirror, that it was not in our faces at all.

To-day, the face of Nature is bright and smiling, but it does not seem so to me. Yet I know the fault is not in Nature, but in the troubled, restless heart that reflects it.

It is all very easy to say to myself, "I will pretend that so and so never happened, and that will make it as if it had never been," — the problem is not to be worked out in that easy fashion! I cannot pretend to what I do not feel. The old open frank friendliness is something that is not to be counterfeited; and since I cannot bear to seem cold and unkind, my only resource is to absent myself from the circle where he is. For the past three days I

have hardly seen him at all. I have been busying myself with sewing, and with writing letters, and in the evening Danny and Farrell monopolize the time.

Ernst is taking it very patiently; it may be that he does not care so very much after all. No, I know that is not true! He is honest and sincere, and he would not have spoken as he did unless he meant it with all his heart! He is only waiting till I give him the opportunity to tell me—what I do not at all want to hear.

Life is beautiful enough as it is. To live and be gay, is not that sufficient for the present? This is not the time to be probing one's feelings, to be questioning one's heart, "Do I love — anybody — or do I not?"

Perhaps the perplexing question will somehow settle itself, when the right time comes. There is lots of time for all sorts of things to happen, before we reach Santa Fé.

If I am frivolous, Danny is partly to be blamed for it. It is impossible for anyone to be serious and sensible and sedate, when Danny is around. He is always doing or planning something, in the way of excitement. To-day he has been digging in the pits where those goods were cached, so long ago, and he is proudly displaying a little handful of silver

coins that he says he found under a barberry bush, — coins that were left there, certainly, twenty years ago! And now he is organizing a party to hunt for further treasure. John and I are to help him, and are to have an interest in all that is discovered.

CHAPTER XXV

"EF WE KEEP THE NEEDLE P'INTIN' TRUE"

THIS morning we started from the Caches early, and did not make the usual noon stop, as we needed more time here, to get our wagons ready for the crossing of the Great Arkansas river to-morrow. The camp is in a great state of upsetness. Everyone is getting in everyone else's way, and there is scolding and shouting, and the clink-clank of hammers everywhere.

Tires and bolts must be tightened, new braces set in, and all made taut, so there may be no break-downs in mid-stream. This is always a dangerous crossing. There are deep whirlpool-like holes, and streaks of quicksand, and if the wagons stop for just a moment, the sand piles up in heaps about the wheels so it is almost impossible to start them again.

I had a quarrel with Danny, this morning, about a fragment of a sword which was all that he found to pay him for his digging in the Caches. He declared the weapon an old Spanish relic, and I

wouldn't say that it was any such a thing. There had been an inscription in the grooves of the blade, but the letters were so rusted they didn't prove anything. Danny keeps on arguing about it in the most childish fashion, — after everyone else is tired of the subject; and he had invited himself into our carriage, but I left it to him and John, and went to walk with Uncle Pliny.

Uncle Pliny is having a lot of things to worry him. Two of his mules were locoed, so they had to be shot, and a barrel of molasses rolled over on his foot, so he has to use a cane; and he is over-anxious about the journey, mainly on my account and Anna's.

"I done crossed these plains a mort o' times, but never when they was women-folks along, an' I cert'nly wish we could go round by Bent's Fort, 'stead o' by the Cimarron route. It's longer, an' a heap rougher an' harder on the cattle, down through the passes of the Raton mountains, but it's shorely safer 'n the desert way — 'The Journey of Death,' the Mexicans call it, *La Jornada de los Muertos*, 'count o' the many that has met death thar. It don't deserve that name no more, for now we know the way, an' travels it by the pints o' the compass, same as ef it were the ocean. They ain't no more lan'marks to go by 'n ef it were the sea, —

no hills nor trees nor nothin', only jest a blank level plain. But ef we keeps the needle p'intin' true, we're reason'ble sure o' findin' water, an' somethin' fer the stock to nibble at, 'nough to keep 'em a-goin'.

"But it ain't none too pleasant at best! We needn't expect nothin' else 'n ten days o' blazin' heat, with the sun shinin' fit to blin' one, an' the sand blowin' to rasp the skin to the raw, an' water mighty skurse an' oncertain, an' bitter an' nasty with alkali when you get it. An' that ain't the wust of it, to my notion! It's them pesky mirages, them picters in the clouds a-makin' you think they's water an' trees an' houses, by gum! when they ain't nary one o' them, an' maybe you a-most dyin' for a decent mouthful o' water! — but, as I said, none of these things is bad like they used to be.

"Anyhow, seein' as we've got Harrod to be our Captain, we knows we won't come to no mortal harm. He knows the country as few does, from A to Izzard. Been through it a heap o' times, an' them that's traveled with him says he kep' his men to the mark as no one else could do, for all that he were that jolly an' good-natured with 'em. He ain't like that no more, but he's had enough to make him different.

"I dealed with him when he had his store down

in Santa Fé, an' we counted on him to do better by us' n anyone else would. He shore made a mint o' money them days, but what's money to a man, when his day of trouble comes upon him?

"He had a coachman, that I know'd right well, Hennery Good, his name were, an' he told me how it come that Harrod's life went all to wrack an' ruin. I cain't never see him, a-settin' a-broodin' of an evenin' back in the shadders, away from the fire, without I thinks of it over an' over.

"He was young an' gay, — I know'd that for myself — in them days, married to the purtiest of the Spanish girls, Isabel Olivarez.

"Life looked mighty rosy to them, I reckon! They was dances an' parties an' goin's-on, day an' night. An' all the time they was a volcano o' trouble bubblin' under their feet, an' they not heedin' it!

"They wa'n't a week that someone wa'n't clapped into the calaboose, an' money squeezed out'n him, 'fore he was turned loose. But it was sech a reg'ler thing that they all jest shrugged their shoulders, an' paid the fines, an' chalked it up to profit an' loss. An' so it come all onexpected at the last, when the volcano busted out! Somethin' 'bout taxes, it were, an' the Greasers went plum ravin' crazy! They butchered the Gobernador, an'

hacked the head off'n his body, an' kicked it up an' down the streets — ever'one tryin' to get at it!

"Harrod an' his wife was a-ridin' into town, an' their kerridge got caught between two mobs, in front of Secretary Abrew's house. The devils was after the Secretary — an' they got him an' drug him out'n the door, an' mistreated him shameful, slashin' off his hands before they done killed him outright!

"Now what sort of a old fool be I, to go an' tell you 'bout sech things, as you ain't no call to be a-knowin' of at all? But no more had she — Harrod's wife! Only she had to set there an' see it — worse than I could tell! — She couldn't be expected to stand no sech as that; an' before the week was over she were laid away in the graveyard on the hill, an' her baby boy were buried with her.

"Harrod was dumb an' crazed, — an' it was Manuel Olivarez, kin to his wife, that had to do ever'thin' for him. He sold out all of Harrod's possessions on the quiet, an' sent the gold, sewed up in rawhide, to Harrod's folks back East, — an' then Olivarez got Harrod persuaded to make the start to leave Mexico; an' as he arranged it, Hennery Good was to go with him all the way to Boston, for company like, an' to look after him.

"An' that thar caravan, they was with, never got no further 'n Whetstone Creek. The thieves fol-

lered them from Santa Fé, thinkin' most likely that Harrod had his gold with him. The wagons was overhauled, an' their stock was took, an' thar they was, out on the desert with no teams an' no food, an' nothin' to hope for in the way of relief from the Mexican officials if they should turn back. So they jest kept on a-goin' fast as they could make it, toward the States, — God's country!

"Them three weeks on the desert was frightful, but Hennery Good said the amazin' thing about it was that Harrod stood it out better 'n any of 'em. Thirst an' heat an' starvation an' all was jest the same as medicine to him. He planned ever'-thin' they was to do, an' the way they was to go, an' he'd have brought 'em all safe through, ef they hadn't some of 'em wandered off after a mirage one noontime when he was takin' siesta — an' that was the last of them, as fur as anyone knows.

"They was 'leven of 'em left when they was picked up by the troops an' took back to Fort Leavenworth. But Hennery Good he said Harrod wa'n't never again like what he used to be. It was like the heart inside of him was et out, an' only the rough outside was left, — an' mighty rough it was! Hennery 'd been a-workin' fur him fur two year an' more, yit he turned him his back, 's if he never know'd him, an' Hennery couldn't persuade him to

let him go with him no furder. 'Back to Santa Fé,' were the only word Hennery could get out'n him!

"That thar Manuel Olivarez, the American Consul, that was murdered in Santa Fé last year, was the same Olivarez that helped Harrod in the time of his trouble; an' I cain't help wonderin' ef the Capt'n ain't got some plan in his head to make them Mexicans suffer for that murder, an' all. But it ain't none of my business,—an' anyhow, we can be sure that he won't get no one of us into trouble, no matter what his private plans may be. He'll look after us, proper and right, fur that is the kind of a man he is, an' he couldn't be no diff'rent. An' as I told the men, it ain't none of our business, nohow!"

I had thought Captain Harrod's countenance cold and stern and harsh, and now I knew that it was love — the death-of-love — that had left its mark upon his face. Love, that would never live again!

It truly does not take long for things to happen, when the times are ripe for change! Everything has happened! Everything is changed! The camp has been full of soldiers, and they are gone, and a dozen of our men, Ernst among the others, have gone with them, out to Bent's Fort.

It was almost supper-time, and I was writing, when John rode in at a gallop to tell us that he had heard, off in the northeast, the sound of a strange bugle, — and we could hear it, and the clatter of horses' hoofs, — and in a moment more a company of cavalry swept into view! They told us that as they were coming down from north of the trail, they were intercepted by a white man, a runner from Bent's Fort, who gave them news of the desperate strait the Fort is in. It is surrounded with Indians, who are dancing the Ghost-dance, and threatening to burn everything and everybody.

A trusted half-breed had sneaked into the Fort, and robbed it of all its ammunition and its store of brandy! The theft of the liquor is all that saved the garrison, so they are saying, for the old chiefs are giving themselves up to a drunken carousal, and it will not be till the brandy is gone that the attack on the Fort will be made, — and the relief-party may yet be able to reach the besieged ones in time.

It is a special providence that the soldiers overtook us before we crossed the Arkansas. If we had not kept Sunday at the Caches, they would have missed us by just twelve hours, — and they need the supplies that we were able to give them, need them grievously, — the powder and extra guns

that Captain Harrod has furnished from his own wagons.

Farrell and Danny and Anna and I were in the group gathered around our soldier guests, waiting upon them, listening to them, answering their questions, — when I turned, to find Ernst by my side. I do not remember that he spoke or explained anything, but somehow, I understood that he was going with the others to Bent's Fort, and knew that he wished to speak with me. He took Anna's veil from her arm, and laid it around my shoulders, and together we walked down toward the river, and out to the extremest point of a smooth silvery sand-bar that curved far into the stream.

I tried to speak lightly and easily of trivial things, but I could not; and Ernst seemed disinclined to break the silence.

When I looked at him I saw he was gazing, not at me, but out upon the darkening landscape, across the mirroring waters. The sun was going down behind a bank of purple cloud, and as it disappeared Ernst turned and spoke in quiet tones that thrilled me all the more because of their restraint.

"It is but a moment till they will call me to go, and I cannot leave thee without saying what is in my heart. I think you must have known, since

that day at Pawnee Rock, when the words, — the thousand tender words that had been for so long saying themselves over and over in my heart, — rushed from my lips! And I did not know that I was speaking, till I saw the red blush come to your cheek, — till you turned away.

"Yet I was not sorry — I rejoiced that you knew the truth. I am asking of you nothing, Deya, my heart's love — except that you will remember that my life and soul are yours, and will be yours while life itself shall last.

"You are to give yourself no anxiety if you find in your heart no answer for me. When the right time comes the right answer will come to your lips. The future will decide. For the present it is sufficient that we are friends!"

And as if we were friends, and only friends, he took my hand and held it in gentle and reassuring clasp; and we talked of other things — of the beauty of the evening sky, of the course of the caravan across the dreaded "Jornada," and of his journey through the mountain passes beyond Bent's Fort.

"Peterson knows that trail as well as anyone, but he does not say just where we will meet the caravan again; it will probably be some time within a fortnight, and somewhere near the canyons of the

Ocate. There will be many evenings when we will strain our ears to hear the sound of your sunset signal guns; and when we will be scanning the heavens to see the smoke of your evening camp-fires rising above the rim of the canyon walls."

As we retraced our steps, going back to the camp, the western sky shone bright with glowing color — rose and violet and amethyst and chrysoprase — and like a lonely island in the midst of that sea of light there floated a broken bar of purple cloud. A last golden glittering beam from below the horizon streamed upward and flung itself across the cloud-mass; and it was no more a lonely island, asleep on the bosom of a mystic sea; it had become a glorious city, with towers and groves, and there was a great gateway through which marched an army with scarlet banners flying.

Ernst drew me close to his side as we watched the bright vision change and melt and dissolve into the mysterious twilight. And as we stood there I was conscious of some change within myself. Some new influence, strange, mysterious, intangible, was stirring my heart's pulses as he spoke.

"It is like a vision of fairyland! And did you know, Deya, that love has its beginning in fairyland? That is what the German *haus-frau* tells us! A true saying it is, — yes, I know, for I have proved it!

"On the Mississippi, that evening of fairy-like splendor! Do you remember that night, Deya? The white glory of the moonlight was upon the earth — on wooded bank and swirling waters, — as the "Anna-Eve" drifted down with the tide. And the eddies swung the boat into a thicket of locust bloom, and the air was heavy with its fragrance.

"Among that boat's company was a frail boy and his sister. And that night they were out on deck, and she knelt by her brother's couch; her arm supported him, and in her eyes as she looked upon him was love unutterable."

He had been speaking almost as if it were indeed a fairy story that he was telling, but his voice began to tremble with a deeper note.

"It was then and there that I gave my heart into that maiden's keeping, to be hers, and hers only, forever.

"Since that time we have traveled together — she and I — through an enchanted land. And so sweet a thing our friendship was, I could not tell her of the dearer hope I cherished in my heart, and she did not guess, though to others it was plain — but at last she knew! Her heart was asleep in her breast; it was not in my power to awaken it to life, — perhaps never —"

The bugle sounded. The soldiers were mounted and ready to go, — they were waiting for him. I caught his hand in both of mine, I may have spoken to him, I do not know — only — he took me in his arms — I felt his heart beating beneath my cheek, for just a little moment. He whispered my name — "Deya?" It was a question — the one question! His eyes sought mine in a long, steadfast, sober, tender look, and under that direct compelling gaze I might almost have said the words he longed to hear — but I did not. And then he bent his head and whispered, "*Auf wiedersehen!*" And I answered him in the dear words of farewell, that mean so much more than just farewell, — "*Auf wiedersehen!*"

I watched them ride away down the trail, — till my eyes were blinded with tears.

CHAPTER XXVI

I MIGHT HAVE PROMISED

WE crossed the Arkansas this morning. Franz Bach and a select body of horsemen went first, setting stakes where the water was shallowest, to mark the route the wagons were to follow. John had permission to go with this "party of the reconnaissance," and I mounted Aguilita and followed as far as the bank. Franz Bach saw me there and called out to me to come on, and he would look after me, and so he did, keeping his hand on Aguilita's bridle till we were safely on the other side. Some of the others were not so fortunate as we. Iggy Beauchemie's horse got into a deep hole, and the boy only had time to slip his feet out of the stirrups, when the poor beast ceased struggling and went down, and Iggy had to be dragged out by the hair of his head, quite unconscious for a few minutes, — but nobody made any fuss over him, after he began to come to, and he seemed to think it an affair of little moment, except as he regretted the loss of his "pinto."

Danger is a constant companion, and Death is no stranger to these men of the plains! They hold their lives as carelessly as if each had lives to spare, — as if they could lose one — or two — or three — and still live on! My pony and I stood on the south bank of the river, and awaited the moving of the caravan. The scene was like a great picture painted all in tones of gray. The arching sky was pearl-gray; the stretch of prairie, green-gray; the curving sweep of the river, blue-gray; and the gold-gray sands were at my feet. But when the glowing edge of the sun cut into the eastern horizon, this "Gray-Dawn" picture was withdrawn, and another was substituted — "Morning on the Arkansas."

Across the river the caravan was in motion. I watched the wagons as they went down, with a great splashing, into the water — almost deep enough to flood the boxes. They crossed as fast as the doubled teams could pull them through, then up the bank with a long, strong pull, and a pull all together!

They have taken us along the road at a great rate, to-day. We are well out into the desert — not so very far from the Sand Creek Crossing. This is the desert, as Uncle Pliny had described it — white-hot sand, withered sage-brush, prickly-pear, grasshoppers, lizards, toads, centipedes, spiders

of amazing bigness and ferocity, and snakes, more than I ever care to see again! But we are not suffering for water, nor are we likely to if Uncle Pliny's guess proves good.

"The Arkansaw's higher 'n I ever ricollect to see it at this season, an' that's a good sign fur thar bein' right smart o' water along the springs o' the Cimarron."

Even where the pools have been filled up by sand we find water just below the surface, so we have plenty for the stock, and as for ourselves there is water in the water-kegs. But this we will use sparingly, as we can hardly expect again to find water untainted with alkali, until the "Jornada" is passed.

Our experiences so far have not been unpleasant. In the middle of the day the sun was, as Himey said, "hot enough to draw a blister," but as soon as the sun was out of sight a cool sweet wind blew across the sands, and in that instant everyone forgot all about the heat. The men are romping and wrestling, and dancing to the inspiring strains of Twank's squeaky little fiddle, but Joe-Lu — deserted by his foster-brothers, Auguste and Franchy — has no part in the merriment or music. He had never before been separated from his two friends for a single day, and made ready to go with them

to Bent's Fort as a matter of course, but Franchy bade him stay with the caravan.

"We be back in two week. De caravan need you! More special you an' dat Banff dog. You keep watch by de carriage of dem ladies, dat not'ing happen while we be gone!"

And last night Joe-Lu took his station — rolled up in his blanket — under the wagon next to ours, and the gray wolf-dog walked up and down beside him.

There is no unusual sound or movement in the camp that Banff does not hear and notice. If we but lift our curtains, there is Banff, alert and eager to do what may be required of him. Joe-Lu — because it was Franchy who put us in his charge — would die before he would let harm come to us, and Banff would be glad to sink those long white fangs of his in the throat of any intruder, if Joe-Lu should give the word.

There is not a thing to be afraid of, but it does give one a comfortable feeling, nevertheless, to know that they are near.

Banff's guardianship is going to be a little inconvenient sometimes. It was only just now that Franz Bach came with a message from the Deacon, and Joe-Lu had to spring up in a hurry and catch the dog by the collar, and hold him, while Bach delivered his message. The Deacon had sent word

that we were to blow out our candle and go to sleep, as the caravan would be on the move by midnight, and travel all night, to try to make Sand Creek by breakfast-time.

One's heart is a queer and incomprehensible thing. It says one thing to-day and something else to-morrow. Maybe there is no real depth of feeling in me. The things of the passing moment mean so much to me. "Out of sight, out of mind!" That is the way it seems to be with me. Really and truly I am relieved that Ernst is not with us — and there was one moment when I might almost have said the words he longed to have me say, when I might have promised him — everything! And if I had, I know I would be repenting it, this minute, and forgetting it, as fast as ever I could. I don't love him! Liking is not loving! I don't want to think about love, as yet. I want to be just careless and care-free, and I don't want to step off into the deep waters, even though I know there will be someone's strong arm to sustain me. I'd rather trifle and play along the shore.

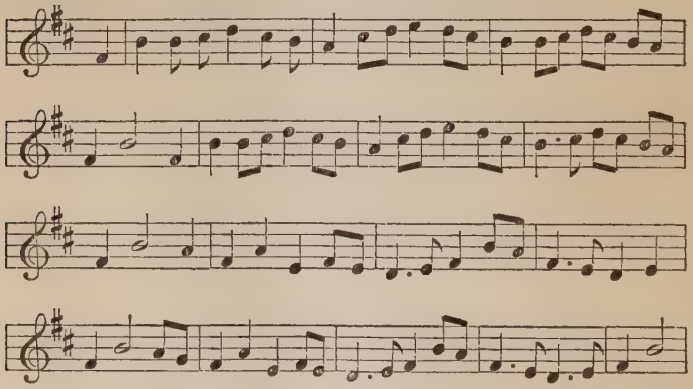
There! I am not going to trouble myself any more about the future! "Never trouble trouble, till trouble troubles you," — that is what Hiram often says, and I am sure it is sensible advice.

Anna does not guess what is going on in my

thoughts. We are together, day after day, and at night she takes me on her arm as if I were her younger sister, but I really know very little about her thoughts — with these calm quiet people one can never tell — and she doesn't puzzle herself with my problems, I am sure.

She is singing the old "Barbara Allen" ditty — "Cruel Barbara Allen." It is just a little appropriate to my own state of mind, but I do not give her credit for knowing that.

She has folded up her pretty patchwork quilt, now almost done, but she has still her ablutions to perform, and her hair to brush and braid, so I do not have to lay aside my book for a long time yet.



"'A hard-hearted creature that I was
To slight one who loved me so dearly.
I wish I had been more kinder to him,
The time of his life when he was near me.'

So this maid she then did die,
And desired to be buried by him:
And repented herself before she died,
That ever she did deny him.

"'O mother, mother, make my bed,
And make it soft and narrow.
Since my love died for me today,
I'll die for him tomorrow.
Farewell, farewell, ye virgins all,
And shun the fault I fell in.
Henceforth take warning by the fate
Of cruel Barbara Allen!'"

CHAPTER XXVII

WAIFS OF THE DESERT

THE desert-journey is over, at last! The "Jornada" is crossed! It has all been like a long nightmare. We have traveled mostly at night, have taken our meals anyhow and any time, and have slept when we could. Day and night have run indistinguishably into each other, so that Sunday came and went without our knowing it; and now, I think, no one is sure about the day and date, only the Captain says this is the fourth day of the month — the Fourth of July — so we all call it that.

Since midnight the men have been celebrating, as good Americans should,— firing guns, having a sham battle, Colonists against the Britishers. It is a wonder that no one was injured in the dangerous game.

If this is Wednesday, the fourth, it is a week and two days since we forded the Arkansas. That first day and night on the desert was not so bad, but when the sun came up on Wednesday morning, a furious hot wind came up with it, and we were

engulfed and smothered in a flying cloud of sand. It struck us in the face, like a stinging whip-lash. Our eyes were smarting and blinded by it. Our throats were dry and choked. Our teeth gritted on it. We breathed sand, ate sand, and drank sand!

The oxen could not face the terrible blasts. They turned this way and that. We lost all track of the course we were taking, and did not know but we were miles from where we should be! At noon the Captain called a halt, and sent out two scouting parties, to try and find Sand Creek Crossing, — or any place where there was water for the stock. They had not had a drop since midnight of the night before!

It was a desperate proceeding to send the men away from the caravan. The air was so thick with driving sand one could see nothing at two rods' distance, and we had to keep firing the big gun, so that those who left us might find their way back again. And we were right near Sand Creek all the time, and did not know it.

Uncle Pliny's party had been gone only a little time, when we heard their guns answering ours. It was the signal meaning, "All is well!" — three shots fired in quick succession and then three more.

The oxen were yoked in and the wagons moved

out to meet the horsemen, and soon we reached the watering place. The teams went steadily enough, till they "smelled water," and then they dashed ahead, like wild and crazy things! Bellowing, they plunged into shallow pools, dragging the loaded wagons after them. Some of the animals were knocked down and trampled on, some of the wagons were overturned, but no one stopped to set things right. The oxen drank till they were full to bursting, and the men drank with them, out of the same puddles, — drank and drank as if that warm and dirty water were the most delicious draught in the world!

We were eating our sand-peppered flap-jacks, at the meal that we called dinner, when Danny came over to tell us about six starving Mexicans that Uncle Pliny had just discovered, crouched under the bushes a little ways down stream. They were in a most pitiful plight, only two out of the six being able to walk without assistance. One of them — José-Marie, they called him — was raving in delirium, and had to be brought in on a stretcher.

Danny and Hiram and the Deacon went over to see them, and John and I, unobtrusively, followed. We found them half lying, half sitting, propped up with bales of goods, and Uncle Pliny was feeding them with a spoon, turn and turn about.

The curiosity with which we regarded them was tinctured with something like hostility — they were so villainous-looking! Their blood-shot eyes gleamed wickedly from under their black brows. Their hair was matted with dirt. They were almost naked, and their bones seemed breaking through their parched and dried-up skin.

Arandez, the leader among them, told how they came to be thus alone on the desert. They belonged with the caravan that left Westport two weeks before we did. They had gone as far as McNee's Creek, when these six men left their camp to look after some stock that had strayed. They came back four hours later to find there was no camp! There was nothing of the caravan but a pile of charred and blackened scraps, where the wagons had been burned, nothing of the men but a pile of bodies pierced by innumerable arrows, — bodies already torn by the wolves. The arrows told the story — a band of Apaches had surprised the camp.

These men — not stopping to mourn their lost companions — turned back again to the desert. There was no lack of water, and for food there were snakes and grasshoppers, and the apples of the prickly-pear. Day by day they grew weaker and weaker but did not think of giving up until that blinding sand-storm struck them!

"Then we say, 'It is no use! Let us die!' And even so we would have perished there, had not the *Americanos* come at the moment, to rescue us!"

They seem most grateful, and anxious to make themselves useful in every way possible. Our people are saying they do not know how we would have crossed the *Jornada* without their help. Having been over the route so lately, they knew where to find the water-pools, so that we were well supplied at every camping place.

"It's plum clever the way we sashayed across this here desert this time," says Uncle Pliny; "quickest time on record's far's I know."

He takes the credit to himself, for was it not *his* Mexicans who showed us the way? Uncle Pliny has never liked Mexicans, but these people he found, lost and suffering, and saved them from starvation, and that makes a difference! He looks after their comfort in every way, and has taken the decentest looking one among them, Ignacio el Viejo, to help him, as clerk, in his grocery store.

CHAPTER XXVIII

SUCH ARE THE RULERS OVER US

NO more dreary, barren, everlastingly level lands, — no more wandering, uncertain, shallow, sluggish streams and stagnant pools!

The noisy little rivers foam and fret, deep down in their boulder-strewn, rugged channels. We drink from fountains that gush out, sparkling and cold as ice, from crevices in the solid rock.

High hills obstruct our path, from whose summits we see the abrupt ledges of the mesa-cliffs, — naked spurs of rock, and isolated rounded knolls and mounds. And little valleys lie spread out with a carpet of green, and here and there are gooseberry bushes and wild currants, and little scraggly mulberry trees, and cedars, — really and truly trees!

Within a few days we will be entering the gateway of the foot-hills, where we are expecting to meet those of our friends who went to the relief of Bent's Fort. Uncle Pliny persists in talking of them, — of Ernst Breunner, more than anyone else! There is a tone of reproach in his voice as if he were trying

to make me think well of Ernst. I do think well of him — of course I do! I would be the most ungrateful girl in the world if I didn't! But just the same, the world is not all dark to me because of his absence. It is an ever-new delight to gallop over the hard white road in the early morning, when the wind blows fresh and strong. And at noon I lie lazily back on the cushions and watch the changing pictures in the sky, — the miracle of the mirages, as they come and go. And when the day is done, what joy to see the stars come out, and feel the cool breath of evening on my cheek! I am not thinking at all of the future.

Yesterday, late in the afternoon, John and I were riding with Danny and Franz Bach, when we saw on the plain, far in the distance, scattered groups of moving dark dots. Danny is the possessor of a spy-glass of quite enormous proportions, and by its aid we were able to prove to ourselves that this was a herd, and a large one, of tame cattle — the first we have seen since we left Westport.

We rode post-haste back to the caravan, and reported. The wagons were halted, and the big guns were staked down, loaded to the muzzle, and fired, both together. Instantly we saw through the telescope a mounted horseman appear on the crest

of the Rabbit-ear Mound, some six miles distant. Helter-skelter down the steep declivity the horseman plunged, and in the next minute our men were mounted and riding at their swiftest pace to meet him. By the time the dusty cavalcade returned with the stranger in their midst, the camp had been formed and the stock picketed out, and everything made ready for Sunday.

We had supposed that the stranger would be nothing more than a *cibolero*, an ordinary common stupid herder; but we found him to be, instead, a Spanish gentleman, — the owner of many herds, and the proprietor of an extensive estate thirty miles to the south of us. That he accounted himself a person of some importance was evident at a glance. His fancy cloth jacket was richly braided, and his striped trousers were split at the side, from hip to ankle, to show the snowy white drawers, *calzoncillos*, that were worn underneath. His *zerape* was of the finest quality, his *sombrero* a very marvel, bedecked with silver braid and bullion balls and tassels.

With a grandiose wave of the hand he informed us that he was sole owner of all the region round about us — a paltry hundred thousand acres!

"Cattle also, so they are not to be counted! Yet am I poor! The thieves whom I hire rob me

without reason — not by littles, but to the half of all they touch. It is so always! But two days ago I come up from San Miguel, to take them unawares. They also have the surprise for me! I find the fattest and finest of my herd on the way to the market at Taos. The stout fellows whom I bring with me, they make the thieving wretches to pay in the blood from their backs, for their treachery to their master. Always so it has been! Always so it will be! *No importa!* It is not important enough to anger one's self, — especially as it is not to be helped. *Perdone Vd.* — I beg you to excuse me, that I speak of my own affairs, when I should wish to ask what can I do for you. I am yours to command in all things."

Our men were only waiting the opportunity to inquire about matters in Santa Fé, — about the condition of the markets, were our prospects for profits good? etc.

In answer to the Deacon's questions, our friend, the Señor Farrias, replied:

"Yes, the government, it is still as it was last year. Armijo still holds the reins of power. *Por cierto!* Yes, certainly, it is the same Armijo, — as like to these robber hirelings of mine as if they had been born of the same mother, at the same birth! *Si, si,* the people call him thief, — sheep-stealer, —

that is the reputation he has. The people of Mexico groan, but still they endure!

"It is of God's mercy that he is now ill, — very ill, — so for weeks he has not left the *Palacio*. Perhaps poisoned by the *Gobernadora!* That is what they are saying. *Es muy posible!* It is very possible! What she is everybody knows. She would do the deed and boast of it. Such are the rulers, whom we have over us! Yes, Señor, the collecting of the duties is as usual — five hundred dollars for every wagon that enters Santa Fé, whether it be full or empty, whether it carries calico or silk, — no matter what. It is injustice, thievery, but there is nothing to be done, except by cunning to outwit the thieves. *Si, si,* it can be done, so the toll they take will not be so excessive. See you then! I give you this advice!

"They will send out 'customs-inspectors' from Santa Fé to meet you; you cannot tell where, but somewhere near Moro or Las Bagas. Before they come, you repack all your goods in the biggest, stoutest wagons, two loads in one wagon, burning those you cast away. So you must do if you would save yourself from extortion. Even so you will be paying twice too much, and that thief Armijo will pocket the half of it, as a matter of course! Prices? They should be good. Santa Fé is full

even now of merchants, from Chihuahua, and Socorro, and Zacatecas, even from the City of Mexico, all waiting the arrival of *La Caravana.*

"For, look you! there is a rumor that Santa Fé and Mexico is to be closed to the *Americanos. Santo Dios!* Yes, it is what they say! It will be the ruin of our merchants! Goods we must have, and of whom can we buy if not of the *Americanos?* So our merchants will be all the more eager to buy while they can. They will dispute with each other who shall bid highest for what you have to sell. Profits there will be of a surety. This is the common gossip at San Miguel."

As the crowd of our men pressed around the stranger, Arandez the Mexican was pushed to the front. For a moment Señor Farrias and Arandez stared at each other, and then the big Mexican slipped back again into the crowd. Farrias shrugged his shoulders, like a Frenchman.

"These mongrels are altogether evil, but that big fellow must surely be of the worst! I have seen him — I cannot say where — but it would be no good that one could know of him!"

Our new friend, Señor Farrias, stayed with us over night, leaving camp at daybreak to ride across to his *puesto,* — his ranch-house, — only twenty miles away! He must have met some of his *ciboleros,*

for they made their appearance in time for an invitation to dinner! They were rough-looking fellows, but our Mexicans fraternized with them at once.

Uncle Pliny did not like it that his Ignacio should have helped himself, and his new-found friends, from the liquor casks. Uncle Pliny sells liquor with as little compunction as if it were molasses, but he will not sell it "on a Sunday." This did not trouble Ignacio. He just went and helped himself — filled his jug and took it over to the ravine where he and his friends had taken up their quarters.

"They was havin' a reg'ler jamboree, — a-fightin' an' carryin' on at a great rate," Uncle Pliny said. "I ain't used to puttin' up with no sech didoes, an' so I told 'em! Them stranger fellows was that obstreperous, I had to put a bee in their bunnit, an' I jest sent 'em to the right-about, long 'bout their business! They went at the first say-so! I dono how come Ignacio to do sech a thing, to reg-'lerly steal that liquor like he done — he has been right steady and dependable, but I reckon the scoldin' I gin him will be a lesson to him!"

Perhaps it will!

The night-wind is shaking the curtains. The candles are almost burned out. In the sky there is not the faintest glimpse of moon or star.

CHAPTER XXIX

A FACE I LONG TO SEE

THE past two days have been hateful and horrid. All other days have been hot, but these have been cold, and there has been a bitter, sulphurous taint in the air. All other days have been bright with sunshine, but these have been dark and gloomy and depressing.

Last evening the trail led through a narrow, tortuous defile — a ragged wound cut deep into the breast of the hill. On either side of us the rocks were red and blotched and slimy, — crowding us so closely it seemed that they must surely draw together to crush us! Our camp for the night was made out on the open plain, but through the hours of darkness, even in my dreams, I could hear the roaring of the blast as it swept down through the canyon.

There were two consciousnesses alive within me. I knew all that was really and truly going on in the camp, — yet, at the same time, I was deep sunk in dreaming. Strange and fantastic images presented themselves before me, and flaming outbursts of color, dissolving, changing, melting into each other, till

I was dazzled, distraught! Then there was no color, no light in all the world, only utter darkness. And there was no solid earth, naught but heaving chaos, a tossing, muttering, viscid, slimy flood. I was trying to cross its treacherous surface, and there was no firm, safe spot where I could, for a moment, rest me. And hovering over me, following me, was a black, cloud-like, formless thing — a malignant, poisonous, altogether-evil presence. I felt it settling around me, I felt its clammy touch on my brow, I writhed myself free, and in some strange manner — partly gliding and partly flying — I fled fast and far! Then the earth slid away from beneath me, and I felt myself falling — whirling down and down, through unfathomable abysses!

The horror of it awoke me. I was cold with terror! My limbs were strained and rigid; my hands clenched so tightly, it was pain to unclose them! It was pain to move!

Perhaps I ought not to write this, only somehow writing helps to make me realize that it was, after all, only a dream, and dreams are nothing.

Anna is an inspiration to cheerfulness. To-night, when it came time to make ourselves ready for supper, she laid out my pink sprigged lawn for me to wear, and for herself, her next-to-best white

dimity. Pretty clothes have their effect upon the wearer. A gay and unruffled state of mind seems naturally to go with a gay and beruffled gown. So, as I contemplated my crispy, starched ruffles, I smiled and forgot that I had been foolish enough to let foolish dreams trouble me.

We have had such a quiet and pleasant evening. I worked at my tatting — I have yards of it done, and haven't the faintest idea what I will use it for, — and Anna was busy with her embroidery. She is never, never idle! I thought she would be content to sit with folded hands, for a time at least, when her quilt was done and put away; but she found something else to take its place at once — a fine white apron, with an intricate pattern of eyelets and dots. I suppose she would think it downright wicked if her hands were not always employed. I never see her without she has her lap full of work — quilt, or apron, or something.

If I were to write what I am really thinking, I would write *Ernst — Ernst* — a name, to serve as a charm, to keep troubled thoughts away. There is a face I long to see, — a fine, strong, honest, kindly face, — and eyes within whose depths a true, enduring affection beams. If I might only lay my head against Ernst's breast, — if I might feel his hand enclosing mine!

CHAPTER XXX

BANDITS BY THE FIRE

WE are nearing civilization! We passed two dwelling houses yesterday. One was a long, low, rambling ranch-house, built of "dobe," the other a little Pueblo-Indian hut. The ranch-house was three miles from the trail. Franz Bach said:

"It iss bedder dot it was furder dan t'ree miles! You can schmell him, dis close! Leon Darasse live dere wid his pigs and goats! Schmell! Oh, my! De dirtiest house effer was!"

After this strong recommendation, we refrained from riding across to buy butter, as we had purposed doing.

The second dwelling was such a strange little mud-covered hole in the ground that we would not have recognized it for a human habitation if the young proprietor had not stopped us. He had everything to sell — chickens and eggs, luscious melons, green string-beans, peas and peppers, and cows'-milk cheese and butter. Of all the banquets that were ever served! Words cannot do it jus-

tice! But we showed our appreciation — there was no doubt on that score.

While we were taking our nooning, "Juan" let us go where we would and see all there was to see. He had a little drove of hogs, a little flock of sheep, a cow and a half, and a burro almost as big as Banff.

A mountain stream that runs across the valley to join the Canadian-fork has been turned into parallel ditches to water his bit of ground, which he plows with a pointed, crooked stick, drawn by the burro and the cow.

I was making a sketch of the wattled, mud-smeared cottage, when I thought I heard someone moving inside. I was curious to know what the interior of such a place could be like, so I boldly enough knocked at the rude lintel.

No one answered, but I saw at the further end of the darkened room a brown and bashful beauty, peeping at me from behind her hands — a young Pueblo Indian girl. She wouldn't come out to me, and she wouldn't invite me to enter! I ran back to the carriage and got a bead collar that I did not care for, and a little mirror, to give her. Behold the Greeks bearing gifts! The little brown lady was so excited that she quite forgot she had ever been afraid.

The place was cleaner than some white folks' houses that I have seen. On one side were the grinding-stones, *metates*, and neatly ranged on the shelves above were the vases and jars, *ollas*, and the gourds, *guajes*. On the other side was a low platform covered with home-woven blankets. Above this platform hung all her finery, spread out to show to the best advantage, — the deerskin jacket and leggings, the coarse but snowy chemise, and the scanty bit of scarlet cloth that served her for a skirt, and, most important of all, the twenty or thirty strands of blue and white beads that made up her *fiesta* necklace.

The little hut was a "home" — better than many a palace; for love was there!

I could understand quite a little of what she tried to say, — enough to know that she and her adored *esposo* had been church-married, by the priest. This was their second year upon the *rancho*. "They sell *mucho* to the *Americanos!* Soon be rich, — go where the *madre* live — down near old Pecos, *si, si!*"

She asked me if I were Señora — a married lady! I shook my head emphatically, but she looked roguish, and nodded and said, *Pronto?* and laughed delightedly. To change the subject I took the ribbons from my hair, and tied them on her thick

black braids — but this terminated the interview abruptly. The scarlet ribbons had to be shown to her "Juan" at once.

The caravan passed on, and Adam and Eve were left to each other's company, in their Eden, with the pigs and the sheep, and the cow and a half, and the tiny burro! — richer in their possessions than many who count their wealth by the hundreds of thousands.

This is the region of the great Rockies. The mountains will henceforth be always in our sight, the guardians of our way.

I forget how many days ago it was when I first saw the distant mountain range, and knew it for what it was. I had been watching the clouds in the west, glowing under the last beams of the quickly vanishing sun. They grew pale, and melted into nothingness. Only the pallor of the twilight sky remained, and, lying low on the horizon, a dark edge of purple cloud. I noticed something strange in this, for while other clouds were moving, dissolving, changing with every moment, this cloud did not change. Its softly serrated outline kept its form, and still showed its solid bulk against the darkening sky, till the first star-beams were kindled there. And then I knew that it was no cloud,

indeed, but the lofty crest of the far-away Rocky Mountains.

It was late this afternoon when we entered the cañon of the Canadian. The river brawls along between high splintered walls, over a miry bed, bestrewn with water-worn rounded boulders. The track we follow cannot be called a road. There are heaps of piled-up stones where one would think it impossible for wagons to go. In trying to avoid these we get into quagmires that threaten to hold us in their slimy clutch forever, in spite of the best efforts of our teams. The river itself turns desperately first to this side of the canyon and then to that. We have crossed it eleven times, and we are not out of the canyon yet!

We were making what haste we could, hoping to get through it before time to go into camp, when the caravan came to a sudden halt. One of the foremost wagons had smashed itself completely, and in a place where there was no room for another team to pass! So here we are! And so we had to make camp, strung out along the trail, in a horribly unprotected position.

Our carriage is in a sheltered corner, a little nook in the eastern wall of the canyon, near a clump of piñon and cedar trees. John and Farrell and Danny gathered heaps of dead branches, and threw them

on the coals of our campfire. The flame crackled and roared, and a fountain of fire sparks streamed upward, higher than rocks that shut us in.

Close to the blaze, so I think it must have scorched them, sat the Mexicans. They had never before presumed to enter our part of the camp, but Hiram called them, to give orders about the broken-down wagon, and being there, they stayed. They were decked out in an extravagant fashion, in gay jackets, tasseled sombreros, fancy neckerchiefs, and boots with jingling spurs.

Danny whispered behind his hand to me:

"Say, doesn't it look like a theater scene? We only need Twank or Joe-Lu to do the tremolo and the jumpy chords on the violins to make it exactly like a play on the stage. 'Bandits enter L.U.E., take position in Center, around practical fire.'"

It *was* theatrical in its effect, — and mightily effective! The firelight displayed to advantage every point of their "costume" and "make-up," every trick of manner. We noted the sprawling, lounging attitudes, the rolling of the everlasting *cigarritos*, the knotted hands, coarse and ugly, the black tangled hair, the bronzed faces, the full red lips, red as if painted, the gleam of the white teeth under black mustaches, the glitter of white eyeballs under the scraggly, overhanging brows,

the narrowed, sidelong glance, restless, sly, and sinister.

They were typical stage villains, and their conversation served to carry out the illusion, as they related, in their broken English and mongrel Spanish, a series of horrid and blood-curdling stories — of ghost-haunted gulches, caves, guarded by skeletons, where robbers had hidden their treasure, of caravans where men had turned on each other with the ferocity of beasts, crazy with the lust of blood. And Arandez told with an over-abundance of revolting details of a murder he had witnessed in Westport, less than a year ago! In the firelight his face looked positively diabolical, — and poor José-Marie, the weakest and sickliest one among them, crumpled down in a heap, and gasped and struggled and beat the air with his hands! Arandez laughed, a heartless, sneering, cruel, laugh, as Ignacio and Pedro dragged the almost unconscious creature off to their part of the camp. Arandez lingered to explain that the man was crazy drunk, *un loco, un borracho.* "Drink *mucho, siempre! No bueno!*" And then he, too, left us, — much to our relief. They will not be permitted in this part of the camp again, so Hiram and Danny promise us.

As the Mexicans left us we heard a burst of gay laughter, and the sound of lively music! Farrell

and Twank and Burt Fones, and Eddie Evans, were serenading the different groups at the different campfires. They were not singing for nothing! There was tribute to pay, in eatables and drinkables. Mr. Williams set about brewing a pot of strong coffee; and while it was getting ready to boil, the boys entertained us with the choicest songs in their repertoire, — such moving melodies as "Billy Boy," and "Ranordine," and "Come where my love lies dreaming," and "Love's Ritornella."

Deep down in the gorge, we could see only a narrow strip of sky above us, but we knew that the full moon was mounting into the heavens, for her silver lances of light were breaking against the upper crags of our dungeon walls. A rainbow-tinted misty veil of cloud hid the stars for a moment, and then the Lady Luna took possession of our bit of sky. The fantastically splintered rocky walls were sparkling with diamond-bright points of light, like Aladdin's Cave, and all the canyon was flooded, filled to the brim with the radiance of moonlight. The air was like balm, warm and fragrant, delicious to breathe, exquisitely soft and caressing in its touch.

For a time there was no sound, save the rippling of the little river against its stony banks. I would have said there was no thought in my mind but that of the beauty of the night, — but there must have

been something like fear there, too, for I felt a sudden and distinct throb of relief when Banff crossed over to us and lay down between Anna and me. I dared to put my hand on his head, and he accepted the caress without objection.

To the others, the moonlight must have been like a hasheesh-draught. They were exuberantly, wildly, gay. Even Anna talked and laughed, as I had never heard her before. She almost flirted with Farrell — positively — and Hiram beamed and thought it was so smart of her!

Joe-Lu felt the intoxication of the moment, and his bow fell upon the responsive strings with a savage force and swing. The hollow shell thrilled with the stormy ringing sequences — caught from no one knows what strange source. It made the breath to catch in the throat, and the heart to beat with wild, erratic pulsations. It dominated everything. The boys' laughter and nonsense were but the running accompaniment to the wild strains. Hiram set the bonfire to blazing high, and Danny and Burt indulged themselves in a riotous, eccentric, wholly extemporaneous dance that the Walpurgis-night witches might have envied, for its grotesqueness and abandon!

Banff was growing restless and uneasy. Several times he lifted his head, and growled, deep in his

throat. Anna stroked his head, and bade him be quiet; and she told the boys to stop their nonsense, as Banff did not like it.

She had hardly spoken when the sharp report of a rifle deafened us. The echoing walls of the gorge repeated it again and again, in simultaneous crashes, — and Banff gave one deep savage cry, and bounded upward. I screamed, for I thought he was springing at Anna's throat. It was his unconscious death-struggle. He fell at our feet, — dead!

We were shocked — stunned! We stood there dumb — wondering what would happen next! I expected Joe-Lu to break out in a wild fury, — but he only lifted the limp body in his arms, as if it had been a human creature whom he loved, and carried it to his sleeping-place; leaving it to others to find the one who had fired the deadly shot into the midst of our circle. Hiram could only think of Anna. As he hurried us to the carriage he besought her not to be frightened — though he, himself, was all unnerved, thinking of the bullet that had sped by so near to her!

Danny was the only one who kept his wits. The flash of the gun had come from the wagons which sheltered the Mexicans. Danny was the first one to discover José-Marie, trembling and crying, with his gun close beside him, still warm and smelling of

powder-smoke. At once he confessed that it was his gun that had fired the shot.

"But I not fire it! I would not purposely kill the dog! No, *es imposible!* — though the gracious Señores know the dog is a wolf of the most vicious! I fear him *mucho*, but I fear the anger of our Capitan, the Señor Harrod, more! And he would not allow that harm should come to that dog! Also the great distance — and the darkness — I could not shoot to kill, — and I tremble yet with the sickness that came upon me. Because I am afraid — always I am afraid — I load the gun, — it fall — it shoot itself off. I did not do it! I swear I did not do it, — in the name of the holy Christ, I swear it!"

That any one would deliberately fire into our group was a thing not to be believed. It was so manifestly an accident, and José was in such a pitiable state of fear, that nothing could be said to him in the way of reproof. Instead, Uncle Pliny and Danny did all they could to reassure him, and Uncle Pliny went to his wagon and made up a potent cordial, and gave it to him, and stayed by his side till he slept.

Anna and I sat up till Hiram came to tell us about José-Marie, and how the gun had been accidentally discharged. All the time he was talking I noticed that she kept her hand wound up tightly in the

corner of her apron, and I sent Mr. Himey off as quickly as I could, and then I turned to her, and unwound her hand from its improvised bandage. The bullet that had found Banff's heart had wounded her, cutting a furrow, hardly more than skin-deep, across her white palm. I washed it carefully, and dressed it, and bound it up; and then she let me undo her hooks and eyes, and brush and arrange her hair for the night.

In half a dozen minutes she was sleeping, calmly and sweetly, as if nothing alarming had transpired; but I could not close my eyes, I knew, so I did not try. I tremble yet as I think of Death's messenger that came so near to us, that left as a sign that red mark upon her hand!

A cold damp breeze is sweeping down the canyon. The moon has forsaken her place in the high heavens, and we are again left in shadow.

CHAPTER XXXI

A SONG OF MYSTERY

THIS morning we woke up to find that Hotchkiss and Jone Wright had both of them slipped away in the night; and Franz Bach said, "Id iss vot alvays happens ven we gedt near der towns! Cifilization plays der mischiefs mit dem poys! Six veeks alretty on der blains, — id iss no vonder dey like to gedt vere der iss a city! Dey iss no more to pe depended on ven we gedt near Santa Fé!"

It was Hotchkiss's turn to go on guard last night for the second watch. Joe-Lu was to have been on duty till Hotchkiss came, but when he did not put in an appearance Joe-Lu kept watch till four in the morning, and John was awakened by a disturbance among the stock, and spent the rest of the night walking up and down with Joe-Lu; and Joe-Lu told him of his many journeys on the Mississippi, of the people he had met, and the scenes along the way.

"For all that he is so quiet," John said, "it isn't because he is stupid. There isn't a sparkle on the

river that he does not notice and treasure up and put into music. And he told me something of his plans for the future. Joe-Lu will never be satisfied to stay here in America. There are other countries where a man of talent, as he is, can win fame and fortune for himself, even though he may have a black skin.

And John went on to tell how Joe-Lu was on one of the down-river boats, last year (of course he had to stay with the roustabouts below deck), and as he was playing one night on that instrument of his, he looked up, and saw a white-faced woman leaning over the rail, listening to his music. It was Thérèse LeMoyne, a French woman, an actress from Paris, from the Théâtre Française, who had come to America for a vacation and rest. There were three other members of her company with her, and they beckoned to Joe-Lu to come up on deck where they were.

"'Er eyes dat big an' burnin', an' so deep dey look into mine, it make me shiver! An' she make de sign fo' me to come mo' nearer to 'er, — and I go, lak I walkin' in my sleep. An' she say, 'Play, boy! Play fo' me yet some mo'!' I not afraid of 'er, not 'tall! Dat feedle go on of itself an' tell 'er 'bout de gardens of N' Orleans, wid de sunshine on dem, — of de wide river, w'ere it open into de Gulf, wid de

li'l islands, ev'yw'ere, — an' of de harricane dat sweep de canoe out into de ocean, an' de sky wid clouds dat come down an' dip into de deep hollows of de waves. I already see dat — I myself was in a canoe lak dat! So den de feedle it tell 'er all dat, and mo', — an' w'en I drop de bow she lay 'er w'ite han' on my ahm, an' say, 'Come to Paris, monsieur!' — she call me dat a way — 'Come to Paris. I promise you de worl' will go mad for de music in dat won'erful feedle,' she say. An' I promise 'er dat I come, someday, an' dat is w'at I t'ink maybe I do."

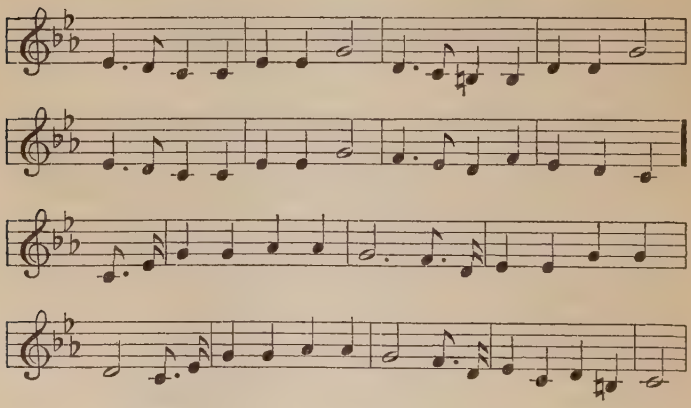
There would be a future for Joe-Lu there, and his color would not handicap him. They are so used to dark-colored people in Paris they would not notice a shade or two of difference. They have Spanish and Creoles, and Italians and Greeks, and black Russians and Moors, and they don't think much about the color of a man's skin, just so that he knows something, just so he can do something — that is all that counts.

"If Joe-Lu would go to Paris," John said, "I bet he'd be making money right from the start, for there isn't a musician like him in the world, I know there isn't!"

I think perhaps Joe-Lu would not have spoken so freely to John, only he is homesick for Auguste

and Franchy, and I am sure he misses Banff more than he would like to own.

He has been playing again that old song his mother used to sing, the song with the "Affican" words. He used the strangely-sweet melody as the theme of a series of wandering improvisations, — difficult and brilliant, simple and unutterably plaintive. The refrain so often repeated fixed itself in my memory so I think I can write it down.



"We-a-chi-no-li; We-a-chi-chi-no-li.
Lu-bel-pe-be-she; We-a-chi-chi-no-a-li."

Neither Franchy nor Joe-Lu know what the words mean, only, as Franchy says, "From de way Mammy Jule sing dem, we know dey be love-song, an' fo' loneliness!"

Whenever Joe-Lu sings that song, I always see,

see, in my mind, the same picture, — the picture of a dark ship on a tropic sea, a majestic womanly figure, straight and tall, like a statue of bronze, standing on deck, stretching out her arms to the shore, — Heaven's glory above her — the dark and fetid shambles of the slaves' quarters under her feet. Far away, beyond the fast disappearing shore, are the friends of her childhood, all whom she has known and loved, and she sings this song, — a song of mystery, of haunting fears, of hopes, vague, elusive, — hopes destined never to be fulfilled!

"Boy-John! Boy-John!" It is Joe-Lu calling. He and John and Danny and Franz Bach are going up the canyon to the north, after a flock of mountain-sheep that someone has seen in that direction. This is their avowed purpose, but Franz Bach says, "Maype, too, we see de redt schmoke of der camp-fire of dot Bent's Fordt Barty! Id iss dime dot dey vos coming. Maype so, we pring dem pack mit us. Id would not pe so strange."

CHAPTER XXXII

THE PRICK OF THE SHARP BLADE

THE Mexican waifs will never trouble our part of the camp again, for they are gone, and that is not the worst of it! They have taken Barnaby and Aguilita, and most of the mules, and guns and powder and provisions, seven hundred dollars in gold out of Uncle Pliny's money chest. And Captain Harrod has had my brother John arrested, with Wes Beasely and Downing.

They were all three doing guard duty last night for our section, and Captain Harrod says one of them was guilty of criminal negligence, if they did not actively assist in the robbery! It was in our section that the wagons had been unchained to let the robbers through. The trail was plain down to the water's edge. No one thinks that John would willingly let the thieves get away with their booty, but it is possible he might have been asleep, or he might have been careless about keeping strict watch, and so he is held with the other two.

Wes Beasely was the first one to be questioned. He hesitated and stammered and looked guilty,

right from the start, and he told a most evasive and crooked story. No, he had not slept, he could swear to that; he heard no unusual sound, he had walked his beat all the time, as he was expected to do. Well then, yes, he had stopped, but only for a moment, to talk with Ignacio. Yes, as Lieutenant Stoneman saw, he believed he did play one little game of cards with that Ignacio, — surely only one game! Drink? — one little drink, that was positively all! He was ready to take his most solemn oath that the escape from the camp was not while he was on duty, not between the hours from ten to twelve, — and his protestations sounded almost genuine.

Downing, who followed Beasely in the night watch, was next called upon, and he declared emphatically that Beasely did not "show up" till long after he, Downing, came on duty, — possibly half an hour, anyway twenty minutes, he could not be sure. Beasely had undoubtedly been drinking, was drunk "as a boiled owl," — that was the plain fact in the case. Downing himself had been wide awake; he had patrolled his beat as usual, and had seen nothing out of the way, heard no sound. Though the Deacon and Captain Harrod questioned him sharply and closely he was not flurried. He had a plain story to tell, and told it quietly, and stuck to it.

John's cheeks blazed red when he was examined, and he was very nervous. Yes, he was sometimes afraid when he was on guard, and more so than ever since Banff had been killed; but he would not let that interfere with his duty. Down through the high grass — out to the clump of cedar-trees — he had walked his beat from end to end. Yes, he had been out with the hunting party, the night before, and his eyes were heavy enough to almost close themselves in spite of his best efforts to keep them open — but he did not sleep. Yes, he forgot, he did leave the line of his beat once — he walked down to the river, where he thought he saw something moving, but found it was only a shirt hung out on a bush to dry. He was certain, perfectly certain, that the Mexicans did not leave the camp while he was on guard.

There were other witnesses to be called after breakfast; witnesses who said they had heard things, or had noted suspicious circumstances, witnesses eager to be allowed to talk.

The three guards had not been permitted to hear each other's testimony, and now they were to be kept separated, so that no one should speak to them till the examination was over.

It *did* hurt to see John under surveillance, as if he were a criminal, even though we knew that all

must be treated alike. But Joe-Lu did not take it philosophically; he was beside himself with wrath.

"No need to set dat Beauchemie to watch Boy John! 'E tell 'em dat 'e know not'ing 'bout de robbery, — ain't dat 'nough? W'y dey not go after de t'ieves — dat's w'at I say, an' make dem say who is de traitor in dis camp! I go, myself! Not ask nobody! I take care myself!"

His eyes flashed fiery gleams, his voice was hoarse, his frame was trembling with indignation. He plunged into the stream, his eyes scanning every overhanging branch, every displaced stone, that might give him the trail they had taken. His training in the north-woods served him well, for once found, the fugitives' tracks were as plain to his eyes as if sign-posts had been set up for his guidance.

Breakfast seemed an interminable meal. When at last it was finished, Truesdale and Hilton, and several others, told what they knew, and what they guessed at; but their surmisings, and the things they had heard amounted to nothing. And Wes Beasely was going over his story again, incriminating himself more and more deeply with every word he uttered, when Captain Harrod caught sight of Joe-Lu in the distance, striding along, dragging

José-Marie after him, over prickly-pears, and between rows of spiny thorny cactus, quite as if the Mexican were but a straw-stuffed scarecrow, — dirty, disheveled, all but frightened to death José-Marie! Sustained by his wrath, Joe-Lu counted the man's weight as nothing; and as if it were but a bundle of dirty straw that he carried, he threw his load down at the Captain's feet, and with a fine air of unconscious dignity, he said:

"Dere 'e is! Ask 'im w'at you want to know! 'E tell you ev'yt'ing! Yaas! 'E was coming back — of 'imself — purpose to tell! I bring 'im a li'l quicker, da's all!"

José-Marie lay on the ground where he had been cast, and as he lay there his lips babbled out his story.

"*Sí, sí*, Señores, — it is the truth I wish to speak — I cannot bear the burden of such thoughts — such wickedness! — They beat me on the head, they slash me with knife, because I would not they should do robbery so vile! I tell them, all the time I tell them, it was wickedness too monstrous — after you save us from the death, and treat us like we be brother. Uncle Pliny, he so good. And to take the gold from his chest! I had nothing to do with the planning! *Sí, sí*, Señores, I mean to tell you all! Who help us out of camp? You not know

that, already? Surely it was that Downing, — who else? He and Arandez, they make it up between them."

Downing's guards were so intent on the Mexican's story, they had forgotten to watch their prisoner! Without warning, he sprung upon José-Marie, and struck him in the back with a knife! His desperate act was repented of, however, before it was consummated, for he dropped the weapon and said, sullenly:

"This José-Marie is a fool — and crazy besides! There is no word of truth in him! He is a liar and the father of liars!"

The prick of the sharp blade drove José-Marie to frenzy.

"Fool? Liar? That Downing to say that to me! I prove what I say! Crazy? Me? Look you, then, in his wagon; in his chest, in the bottom is secret place! There you find the gold! You see! — Then you say if I *un loco!* Crazy! And liar!"

Stoneman went to investigate, but before he could return, Downing had confessed his treachery. Without protest, with a stupid unconcern, he allowed the iron shackles to be placed upon his wrists.

Stoneman found the chest, and the secret place

with the money, just as the Mexican had said. The gold had not been taken out of the money-bags. Uncle Pliny had kept them on the counter, open and unguarded in the daytime; it was only at night that he locked them up in the chest,—we all knew the look of Uncle Pliny's money-bags! I was so glad to see the gold back in his hands. I do hope he will make money enough, this trip, so he can stay in Tennessee, as he wants to do, and build the "ell" on his "darter's" house, and buy her the new loom, and the big "store-rocker" for himself, — so he can always "set by the fire, with Loretty's children a-playin' round!"

I was talking with Uncle Pliny, and forgot the Mexican, — but he was still explaining.

"That Beasely, he *no sabe*, but help, just the same. Ignacio make monkey — cat-paw — of him. He play card, get drunk, *mucho!* We make pack upon the mules, and tie buckskin over hoofs, so there be no noise. Then Downing come, — he go on his beat, — he not look! We unchain the wagon, and get away, — and for that Ignacio give him Uncle Pliny's money!

"Wait, wait, *sí, sí*, I tell you! Why take so much powder? I hide nothing! It this way. We have secret of the great mine — La Glorieta mine, that has been hid for so many year, — covered up

under the sliding down of a great hill. We have the map, that tell us where to look for the entrance of that mine. It take much powder! So we get powder from the Captain's wagons, and the other things what we need from Uncle Pliny. *Sabe?* It take many mules to carry off the treasure. Such treasure! We be rich, we think, rich like the richest in Mexico, in Spain! Our hands full of the treasure of the mine, — La Glorieta!

"Yet, look you, Señores! I swear to you that I tell them no luck come if they rob these people so kind to us. But they no listen. I go with them — what else can I? Yet I knew Death was on our track, and I say to them, 'It is *Friday*, and of the month, the *thirteenth!*' And as we leave the camp a night-hawk flap her wings in my face, and cross our path with double cross! — So always I beg them to go back! And I weep, — and then when we down in arroyo they stab me, and strike me 'cross the head, so that blood blind my eyes!

"Blood in my face, and on my mouth! Like as when the blood from that old Spanish Señor was on me — *Por Diós!* I have enough of blood! My God, yes! Not for the richest mine in Mexico would I go with them further! I slip from my mule. In the darkness they no see. I come back to tell you, — so I hope for forgiveness. And I

find this good nigger-man, and he help so I arrive with more swiftness. See, I tell you all."

Oh, no; not all! He had hinted at another crime, that he had had a part in, and the Captain determined to know that story also. José-Marie looked up blankly at the Captain's first question in regard to this.

No, — yes, — he knew not what he said! Things no true, — he so frightened — so sick — *un loco* — even as Downing had said!

José-Marie, even bewildered as he was, knew that to admit complicity in a murder was to sign a death-warrant for himself. But under the fire of Captain Harrod's glance, his little soul shrivelled into nothingness, and his lips poured forth all that had found lodgment in his consciousness.

There were seven Mexicans, thieves and cut-throats all, who had wintered in Westport, — José-Marie, Arandez, Ignacio, Pedro, and three others. During the winter a half-witted old man, an old Spanish Don, whom they had seen many times in Santa Fé, Don Enrique de Velasco, made his appearance in the town.

This old Velasco was sour and morose, a savage when aroused, but because the hand of the Great Spirit had beclouded his faculties the Indians gave him food and shelter. Perhaps he may have

remembered the faces of Arandez and the others, for after he saw them he attached himself to them, so they could not rid themselves of him, so José-Marie said.

"One night we all drinking. I sleep on floor by the table. Arandez is craze when liquor in him, and for nothing at all, only that he is wicked and cruel always, he stab the old Señor! I sleep! I know nothing! But it is upon me that he fall! His blood upon me! And they not help me rise, — they laugh and leave me there! They strip his clothes from him, and find, — not money, but much better, in a package wrapped with folds of silk, the map of the mine of which I tell you — La Glorieta!

"We frighten at thought of the riches to be ours! We hide the body, and drink no more. We hire to that Caravan out of Westport in early May. They think we work best of all they have hire. And all time we plan to rob — when we get near Mora-mountain, to rob them of what we need to win that treasure of the mine, — pack-mules, and powder and all. We plan, — but it happen most different!

"We go off together at night to make the last agreement together, what each one do — what share each one have. We come back — the camp

is not! Every man dead! Then we go on desert — you find us when we give up to die! You took us as brother! We weep, among ourselves — even Arandez, — and we swear on the cross to live honest, to give you faithful service, because you save us. Yet in few days, Arandez again talk of the treasure, show the map, and urge us take what we need and go. But there was the dog, the wolf dog. We make move, Banff he know! So Arandez, first chance come, kill him! Yes, take my gun, and when fire blaze up bright, take the long sight, and fire. He kick me with foot and laugh, and go — and leave me to make answer. Always it is me to suffer — always it is me to bear the blame, and I wish to harm no one! The gracious Capitan will not forget that I, of myself, come back to tell all? I care for nothing so I see that Arandez never again, — never again!"

It was the force of Captain Harrod's will that had sustained José-Marie thus far, and when the Captain turned away to give orders for the moving of the caravan, the Mexican collapsed in a heap, and had to be carried to the wagon. It was Uncle Pliny who cared for him, and Uncle Pliny who found excuse for him.

"That Arandez was to blame, — he was an out-an'-out bad-un, without ary spark of good! It

wan't to be expected that a sickly little feller like this José-Marie 'd be able to say him no. Pretty decent of him, I call it, to leave 'em, and come back, with all that treasure in sight, — an' I do suppose he believed them tales 'bout that mine, though it's likely that the map an' all was jest some lie that Arandez got up, for some purpose of his own. Tain't likely they's a mite of truth in it!"

CHAPTER XXXIII

MY RIGHTFUL PLACE, FOREVERMORE

NEVER was a day more bright and lovely! There is a crisp hint of iciness in the air, — just enough to make one's cheeks and fingers tingle with life, just enough to make one long for a wild swift gallop down the valley, with the tall grasses dimpling and billowing in the wind before you! Only, my pretty dear, my pony Aguilita, is not here to carry me.

The lovely open valley clothed in soft green is like a glimpse of Paradise to our cattle! The poor beasties have been overworked and underfed, ever since we left the Arkansas river. They are hardly more than skin and bone. They have earned a good long rest, and they will have it here; for we will stop here to repair our wagons and rearrange our loads, getting them ready for government inspection.

There are only a few idlers in camp — Farrell Montgomery, and Burt Fones, and Twank, and Mr. Willard, and Anna and I. We are in the busy

people's way, so Captain Harrod was easily persuaded to let us go over to Eagle Mountain for the day. Enos Quackenbos is to go with us as military escort. Mr. Williams and his cook wagon are not to be left behind, and we will enjoy our dinner *al fresco* at the foot of the big splintered rock that juts out from the mountain.

We feel as if this were a real adventure, but it will not be a very wild one, for we will be in sight, and within signalling distance, of the caravan all the time.

I am glad Anna is going. Somehow she does not seem her usual quiet self. I suppose she is still nervous from the shock of that wound, and Banff's death, and the robbery, and all.

Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! We are off for Eagle Mountain!

It is Sunday afternoon, and we are at Santa Clara Springs. I am lying here in bed, fully awake after hours of unconsciousness — like sleep, only it was not real sleep, for I knew that John was bathing my head, and tending me. I knew that Ernst was with me, too. He has helped John to lift me, that I might rest easier, and they have tried to persuade me to eat and drink. I miss Anna. She is not in camp. I do not understand. They say that

she and Hiram went down to Mora, and that they are waiting for us there. It is strange.

It seems weeks since we were getting ready for that little summer-day outing over on Eagle Mountain, and it was only yesterday morning, but I can not think about that!

Sudden waves of drowsiness come over me, even when I think I am not sleepy. I think I must have been sleeping just now, for I seemed to hear the church bells ringing — the bells at home. Ding-dong, ding-ding-dong! — till the air was full of the sound. And then I was in church, and father and mother were coming up the aisle, and mother was wearing her new Paisley shawl, and the girls, Lucy and Martha and Margaret and Mary-Belle, were sitting in the choir. And our minister opened the pulpit Bible, and read:

"Thou shalt not fear for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day. There shall no evil befall thee for He shall give His angels charge over thee, — they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. The Lord is my Shepherd, — He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters" ——

My eyes are heavy ——

It is Monday morning, and we are still at Santa Clara Springs.

All of the long evening, all of the long night, I have slept, a sweet dreamless sleep; and I awoke with the dawn, a new creature. Only there is something wrong with my body, for when I try to move my limbs, I can not! But the me, inside of my body, is all right! In spite of what has happened, I feel not exhaustion but exhilaration, as if there were a new energy flooding my veins. If I could only stand and walk!

Up on Eagle Mountain my horse fell and almost crushed the life out of me; but the hurt will soon be over, and the weakness will pass, and I will be up climbing another mountain before the week is out. That is what I told Uncle Pliny. He and Danny were whispering together just outside the carriage curtains, and I heard them, as if they had whispered in my ear.

"Will Deya be a cripple always, do you think?"

I pulled back the curtain and answered them promptly.

"No, she won't be a cripple, nor anything like one! And right now she wants her breakfast, — and someone to wait on her!"

Uncle Pliny laughed his fat comfortable chuckle and said:

"Seems like someone is purty peart an' sassy! An' I don't reckon she's half so bad hurted as she's been pertendin'! An' anyway it's the best sign they is, when an invalid gets smart and snappy!"

They stayed on the outside while John made me presentable, and then I ate my breakfast — and it was not an invalid's breakfast either. They told me all the camp news, — and then I slept again!

Ernst is so comfortable to get along with. He does not bother with questions. He just quietly takes it for granted that we are betrothed; and that seems to me now to be the most natural thing in the world. It is as if we had known each other for years and years, — as if I had promised myself to him long ago!

He gives me credit for knowing what I ought to do, and what I ought not to do; and when I asked him for this Journal book, he got it for me, and smiled a sure smile when I told him I would only write a little at a time, as I feel like it.

When Captain Harrod told us we might go over to Eagle Mountain, he expected us to stay in sight of camp. And so we meant to do; but when we arrived at the foot of the big cliff, we straightway forgot. The men found the fresh trail of a deer,

and they hardly stopped for a word of explanation before they disappeared, Enos Quackenbos being the first one to go.

Anna and I were settled comfortably in the carriage, when John came up to tell me he was going to climb the cliff. He pointed out a pair of big eagles that had all the morning been flying in and out around the top of a pointed crag. We had noticed them before we left camp, and the old plainsmen said it was the same pair that had nested there for years, — the very ones for whom the mountain was named. John thought he could climb to a point above the nest, and look down into it. He did not ask me to go with him, but when I got up in a hurry and tied on my sun hat, he invited me. "Come along! It's more fun when there are two of us!" Anna thought it was all right, my going, and I told her we would see her again in an hour. An hour! And I haven't seen her since!

The face of that split-off rock was almost perpendicular, only there were footholds and stair-steps, that we could scramble up by. When we reached the top of the rock we stood and looked about us. I knew that Anna was sewing placidly there in the carriage but though I called and called she did not look up. We were two hundred feet and more, above the level of the valley.

The eagles were still in sight, and John was sure they were feeding a nest-full of little ones. The crag where we were was almost entirely cut off from the main body of the mountain. In order to cross the chasm that lay between them, we had to creep across a narrow ridge of rock, like a bridge. From the further side of the narrow causeway there seemed to be a good path leading diagonally upward to the mesa-crest.

We lost our eagles! We searched the rocks and sky for them, but they had vanished. We waited, hoping they would come back, and while we were waiting an ugly buzzard, a monstrous bird, — sailed down, almost within stone's throw, and John fired, and missed it. I laughed at him, it looked to be such an easy shot. John blamed the sun in his eyes, the wind, everything but his own marksmanship. To show it was not his skill that was at fault, he fired at a staring white mark on a big round stone, lodged some thirty yards above us on the slope. It was a fine natural target, and we wasted our ammunition on it, each striving to outdo the other. The impact of the bullets set the stone to rocking. That was sport too, and we fired again and again.

The boulder was insecurely balanced, and it began to turn and slide down through the ashy

debris that held it. There was another rock just like it, a little way below, and we had just time to jump aside, when they both came thundering by us! We looked at each other, and held our breath. We felt the force of a great rushing wind. There were tons of rock plunging downward. It was a resistless avalanche when it struck that split-off crag! There was a crash, like the crash of Doomsday; and a shock that made the mountain shake and tremble. Crag and flying rock made the leap together into the valley below. We were enveloped in a cloud of dust, thick and stifling as smoke, and our hearts stood still with an awful fear, for those we had left below! Then we saw them — from the dizzy perch at the edge of the gulf where we were standing. Tears of thankfulness poured from our eyes, for they were safe — we were safe!

Enos Quackenbos was foolish enough to think that he could climb to us from below, but between us was a bare white scar of stone, impassable to anything that had not wings.

The camp was aroused. We could see the men hurrying to mount their horses. A score of them rode across the valley, to a point just below us. By signs they made us understand that we must go on up to the top, and they would go around by

the south, and so up the bridle road that wound around by the south and west, to the high table land above, and that they would meet us there.

After the first shock was over, we contemplated the difficult climb that was before us, with eagerness. John said:

"It's going to be great sport! People climb mountains just for the fun and excitement there is in it, — and here we have no snow-clad fields, no glaciers or ice-bridges. We needn't worry!"

In the *Knickerbocker Magazine* there had lately been accounts of how people had climbed the famous peaks of the Alps, and John thought he knew what was proper to the situation! From a stubby tree he cut two crooked sticks for "alpenstocks." He tore his good zerape into strips, and we sat down and braided them into a rope, which we tied about his waist and mine. We chattered and laughed as if it were a frolic — though deep in our hearts we realized that this was not a playful excursion that we were about to undertake.

The road to the top was not a plain and easy one, even at the first. There was the steep and slippery track of the avalanche that had to be climbed before we could get anywhere. We climbed that place on our hands and knees. Then we found something like a track, that the mountain-sheep perhaps had

travelled, and we followed it as it grew narrower and narrower; and it became a little shelf jutting out from a high smooth wall, — the chasm that yawned below, we did not dare to examine! The shelf was no broader than my two hands, and it turned sharp around a corner so we could not see what lay beyond. We set our backs to the rock wall and slid our feet along sidewise, — and turned the corner! There was a little strip of grassy slope, and two mountain-sheep with their little ones, grazing. A flash of whiteness, and they were gone, leaving no track that we could follow.

It had not occurred to us, at first, that Alpine climbers have with them guides who know the mountains like A B C, while we knew nothing about this place. There may have been a dozen good paths to the top, but we did not find them. Every trail we tried ended nowhere, — either in an abrupt precipice, or against a blank wall.

We finally made our way around to the northern side, and from there the ascent was not so difficult; but it was late in the afternoon when we arrived at a point only a dozen feet from the upper edge of the plateau — and found we could get no further! There was a straight-up bank of clay and soft shaly rock between us and the level top of the cliff. We did not give up in despair, however, We sat down

and drew a long breath, — and we both thought of the same thing at once! We could dig stair steps in the clay! We had two knives, but it was severe work, and we were already tired. Twilight was coming on. The cold wind of evening chilled us. As we got higher, only one could work to advantage, — so I helped to support John's weight, as he cut the shallow niches for our feet. He uncovered a long stout fibrous root, like a rope, to hold by, and I made him set one foot on my shoulder as he worked. I was too dazed and weary to remember very clearly after that. I felt the clods falling on me. I felt the pulling of the rope around my waist, — and I remember setting my feet carefully in the steps that John had made, — the clasp of his hands on mine, — the breaking and crumbling of the earth under me as he drew me up — at last! — beside him!

He carried me to a place where the grass was soft and thick, and we lay down there and slept, I do not know how long. We awoke with a scream, which was promptly suppressed. A pistol shot had been fired — a rapid succession of shots — only a little distance from us. It was no signal, such as our friends might have fired — there was deadly purpose in it!

I do not know why we both should have been so

sure that it was Arandez, and the other Mexicans, who were near us. We lay close to the earth, and held our breath to listen, but there was no further sound, only after a long time we *did* hear the soft stepping of horses' hoofs, and the nipping of the grass as they grazed. There were two horses, and one whinnied, calling to the other. John caught his breath audibly, with something like a sob. He seized my hands.

"Deya! listen! I know it's Barnaby! I know it! And Aguilita!"

He called to them, with the secret call that Kit Carson had taught us, — and our ponies knew it well. They stopped eating. Again he called. They came toward us, — found us, — and thrust their soft noses into our hands!

John gave me their bridle-reins to hold. He said:

"Stay here. I'm going to find where those men are. Give me Barnaby's call once in a while, so I will know where to find you again."

In a little while he crept back.

"It couldn't be better! They are over there to the northwest, in a little arroyo. Yes, it's the Mexicans, of course, only Arandez is not with them. They are sleeping by their fire without any guard. We can get away, if we are quiet about it — if we have luck!"

But I could not mount my pony. I could not help myself in any way! John lifted me into the saddle, a big high Mexican saddle; and then I could not sit upright, but John tied me on with a dozen turns of the lazo-rope, as if I had been a sack of corn. We went as noiselessly as possible, keeping the horses' heads away from the red glare that showed where the Mexican camp was. John whispered that he thought we were on the trail, — the beaten track that would take us down the mountain.

We had traveled for many minutes, and were well below the level of the mesa, when we came to a dangerous bit of road, a broken rocky path with a sheer precipice on the outer side. We needed the moon's light, — and just then the clouds rolled back, and the trail lay before us as plainly visible as if it were day.

We thought our troubles at last were over. I forgot pain and weariness. My spirits were recovering their tone, — my body, its strength. I slipped my right hand out of the ropes that held me, and tried to free my body, so I could sit properly in the saddle, but John had drawn the knots too tight for that. I spoke to him, and he dismounted and came to my side.

And there was Arandez, there in the path! We saw him plainly in the moonlight. His face was

blood-marked, frightful to look upon! He sprang on Barnaby's back, and seeing John he rode straight over him; — but he never guessed that the dark bundle lying across Aguilita's saddle was a living creature. The end of the rope that bound me to Aguilita John had carried over and fastened to the horn of Barnaby's saddle, and when Barnaby was forced into a run up the steep road by the half-crazy Arandez, Aguilita had to follow. John was utterly distraught! Like a wild-cat he was clinging to Barnaby, clawing at Arandez, fighting tooth and nail for the possession of his horse, and screaming at the top of his voice for help — though he knew there was no one near to come to our aid.

He could not really hurt the big man. There was no need for Arandez to use his gun, to rid himself of the clinging figure, but he wickedly drew it, and turned it upon my brother ——

I lived a year in that half-second. I thought of everything that ought to be done, — and deliberately did it! In spite of my cramped position I got my revolver out of its holster, and fired. I, who would never fire at a living target, felt no horror at the idea of taking a human life, — and I knew I would not miss this creature! There was a cry, a spasmodic upward leap, a sudden collapse of the heavy body. But it takes time for a man like that

to die. He had seen the flash from my gun, and he spurred Barnaby against Aguilita to crowd her over the crumbling brink!

A loud report of guns, from down the road, — a rush of clattering hoofs! A dozen dark mounted figures coming up the road! Joe-Lu's voice screaming out an answer to John's cries for help. "Boy John! Boy John!" An indistinct dark form sprang past me, — it seized upon Arandez, and dragged him from the saddle! I had a glimpse of glaring eyeballs, — of a terrible, ghastly, contorted visage! I heard cries and oaths, gurgling, choking, gasping sounds, and smothered calls for help. The horses were wild with terror. Aguilita's hoofs were crunching the stones at the very verge of the cliff. I hung head downward over the abyss — below me was a sea of white mist, with the tops of the pine trees showing through, and that was all. Then across my range of vision there plunged a dark and writhing mass. There was no merciful unconsciousness for me — I knew it was Arandez with Joe-Lu clasped tight in his arms! — and with them went Barnaby, down through space, down ——

Aguilita and I would have followed them, — I had no thought but that it would be so, — but she was suddenly drawn bodily backward. Big Rob was there, and he had thrown himself underneath her,

and the others had seized her by mane and saddle and trailing rope! She fell, but it was upon the roadway, — and I, bound so tightly to her, fell with her.

Ernst spoke my name! He lifted and held me, like a child, in his arms. We were mounted and going slowly down the long trail that led to the camp. I looked up into the face so near to mine; it was transfigured with the holiest of raptures, yet it was white and drawn. Heaven's light was in his eyes, yet they were wet with tears.

I was not sure but that this was a dream. I lifted my hand, and my arm found a resting-place around his neck. My cheek was pressed to his breast, — and then I knew that this was my rightful place forevermore.

John was walking by my side to help support me, and he and the others talked all sorts of gay nonsense, so that I might forget what had happened; but I was too tired to remember or to care.

In the early morning light, the outlines of the wagons were hardly to be distinguished, when we at last arrived in camp. There were many whispered questions and answers — and then I found myself in bed. John made it ready for me. I asked for Anna, but hardly know if they answered me or not, and yesterday was like a dream.

It is Monday night and we are still at Santa Clara Springs.

I am not used to staying so long in one place. I am not used to lying in bed, and it makes me fretful and restless. No one seems to want to talk with me about what happened on Eagle Mountain — and I want to know. But when the others were at dinner, big Rob sat with me, and he answered everything I asked him — about Joe-Lu and the Mexicans, and the Indians at Bent's Fort, and the journey of the relief party down through the Raton Pass, and how they found us, and all.

He said that the Indians around Bent's Fort had learned of their coming, and they had "evaporated and skedoodled" before ever the soldiers and our people arrived there.

"We left the supplies wi' auld man Bent, an' came at a good gait, doon through the mountains, an' there was nae incident exceptin' that we met up wi' a surveyin' party, wha came wi' us for three days' journey. An' your mon, Breunner, he made it up wi' them that they are to go wi' him doon into Mexico, perhaps, — it's no all settled yet, but that's the way they talked it!

"We cam along at the fine gait, an' doon into the camp here at Santa Clara, an' the Captain was a-sendin' the men oot after you, an' we were no to

be left behind, ye understand! It were a sight, to see Joe-Lu wi' Franchy an' Auguste! They poonded each ither in the back, an' laughed, an' laughed, like they was fey! An' Joe-Lu goin' wi' a hap-step-an'-loup, like I never saw him do before! We nane o' us thocht ye was in no danger, ye ken; an' so we went up the hill — an' we heard yer brither cry oot! Then there was no holdin' Joe-Lu — weel, ye ken what happened after."

He went on to tell me how they had tried to get down to where Joe-Lu lay upon the rocks, but there were no ropes long enough to reach him. While they were working and figuring what they should do, they heard the rattle of loose stones in the road above them, and secreted themselves, and were just in time to surprise Ignacio and the other Mexicans.

They made no resistance. Their leader, Arandez, being gone, they submitted stolidly to their fate. They hardly answered the questions that were put to them only to say,

"*Sí, sí,* we drink — we quarrel — we say to Arandez, 'That paper ours as much as yours — let us keep the map little part of the time, we be all brothers and partners.' And he would not, — he curse and jeer at us, — and we fire upon him! So he leave us! — Down there? Let him lie there!

Beast! The papers of the mine — that they are lost with him! That is thing we hate."

They were strapped to their horses' backs and sent, with a guard, down to the prison at San Miguel, sixty miles from here.

If I am not too tired I want to write about my little waiting-maid, Marienella. John declared that he could wait on me till we should get to Mora where Anna is, or while I needed help, but the Deacon would not have it so. He sent Rob out to one of the ranch-houses with instructions not to come back without some girl who could act as nurse and companion for me. The Deacon never stopped to think that of all the men in camp Rob is the one who has cared least to pick up anything of the Spanish language. Rob, himself, would not mention it, for he flatters himself that he can always make himself understood, — by gestures and speaking very loud! So Rob undertook the errand.

"I went up to the hoose, an' there peerin' oot the door were a right bonnie lass, an' I gaed in an' askit her to come wi' me. There were twenty bairns — or maybe not quite so many — a-hangin' round the mither's skirts, but the ane I saw at the door were the smartest ane amang them a', an' right clean an' decent bodies they were.

"An' I made signs that there was a lady sick that needed someone wi' her, an' I told them I was to pay twa months' wage, — that is what the Deacon bade me do. They was lookin' doubtfu', till I put the money doon on the table, — an' then ye should ha' seen them smile! They made na mair hesitation, but bundled up her bit claes, an' put her hand in mine, and kissed her. Guid-hearted folk they be, for the feyther and mither they kissed me! And I told them ye would be good to their lass, and they waved us good-bye, — and here ye see us!"

Pretty good for Rob, seeing that he cannot speak a dozen words in their language.

The little one is bright and gay, and saucy as a squirrel. She is not pretty, but is good-natured and deft, and she seems to know about nursing. She keeps my pillows smooth, and turns them to cool them, and fusses over me — just enough, and not too much.

I keep thinking about Anna, — and worrying. It seems so strange that she should have gone to Moro.

CHAPTER XXXIV

USE FOR THE PATCHWORK QUILT

WE are in the little Spanish town of Moro, and the first time since we left Westport we are under a roof, in the inn. They told me that I would find my dearest Anna here.

As soon as my eyes rested upon Hiram — standing there before the tavern door — I knew! He put a trembling hand on my shoulder and I whispered, "How are they?" His smile was all the answer I needed!

There were tears upon my cheek, — like a child, I was abashed and afraid. Hiram opened the door, and then my feet were swift enough! I stood looking down upon my dearest, loveliest Anna, — and the little one lying upon her breast.

A pang went through my heart — it was a thrill of purest joy, but so sharp, so strong, it hurt as if it were pain! I sank upon my knees, and buried my face in the warm white pillow, and the baby threw his hands about, and caught them in my hair, and Anna had to uncurl the little fingers, so I could raise my head to give her my first kiss, and she would

not have it — the first kiss had to be for the baby. He is perfectly lovely, even if his features are not developed to any great extent as yet, — such golden glittering silky curls, such soft and dimpled flesh, such satiny baby-roseleaf skin — and Anna says his eyes are going to be blue! He would not open them for me to see, though he was not asleep. I told Anna I loved him more than I did her, and I hadn't known him a half-hour!

The foster-mother of all the babies that have been born in and around Moro, for thirty years, is *Tia* Margarita. She is a crooked and stooped old woman, her face criss-crossed with wrinkles, and the wrinkles filled with dirt, but she handled baby lovingly and daintily.

"The beautiful Señora not know much about babies, so she have not the clothes ready for him. It is no matter! There be plenty clothes in the village. Every woman have the one fine garment for her own to wear to church. When they know her need, they bring to her, till I say, 'Enough!' Such beautiful clothes, fit for child of the *Alcalde! Sí, sí!* I make the little one his christening-robe. Yes, I show it you! It is for altar-cloth I embroider it — for the *Padre* of the Chapel at San Miguel. But for christening-robe for the child it is as good; — think you not so?"

As she laid the child again in his mother's arms she drew smoothly over the bed Anna's gay patch-work quilt, which had found its proper use at last, — to brighten the poor room where Anna's baby was born, to cover the mother and child!

The room was the barest ever was — no table, no chair, only a shelf built into the wall, that served as a bench; and the bed was of the same sort, an affair built into the walls, made of poles covered with stretched raw-hide, — no tick and feather-bed, only robes and blankets to make it soft and comfortable.

The floor was of hard beaten earth, almost like stone, the walls of 'dobe whitewashed to a snowy whiteness. *Tia* Margarita was not ashamed of the room — quite the contrary!

"See how clean the Doña Lucia keep it! The window on the street — do you see? Few houses have window like that! But if one have many daughters to marry there must be window for court-ing. Six daughters had Doña Lucia, all married, thanks to the window! *Sí, sí,* flowers, and sweeties, and rings, and vows of love have passed through these bars!"

She looked at me with what was meant to be an arch and roguish smile.

"And if the pretty Señorita stay here but three days, I promise there be many *caballeros* to 'eat

the iron' — that is how we say — to look up at the window, with the longing of love in their gaze. They wait for hours to catch one glimpse of the face, or perhaps a rose from the hand of the loved one! Ah, yes, I have a tenderness for such! I remember the days of my youth! — La, la! I stay and talk, and the Señorita is weary, and the Doña Anna, she is already asleep! *Buenas noches!* I leave you both to the care of the good God, and the Virgin Mary, most blessed, and the holy saints!'

Early this morning, Wednesday, Hiram came to the tavern to take Anna down to the camp. *Tia* Margarita seemed to think it quite safe for her to go on with the caravan.

While Hiram was waiting in Moro, he employed himself in making a hanging bed for Anna, so she and the little one might ride as comfortably as possible.

"So much trouble that baby is making you!" So I say to Hiram, and he agrees with me that "a baby is a great bother," yet he acts as if he were rather proud of the boy! When we got into camp the men were all around the wagon, and he wrapped the child up in the gorgeous quilt and let them take him in their arms. They handled him as tenderly

as if he were fragile glass! But he very soon showed them he was real flesh and blood, for after he had stared at them long enough, he began to kick and squirm, and finally he cried, loud and strong.

The men looked at each other with grins of delight.

"Now ain't that the real boy of it?" "He's sure got a temper of his own!" "Shucks! I wouldn't give a picayune for a boy that didn't have a temper!" "Nor I wouldn't neither. I wa'n't a-sayin' but what I thought 't was all right! No, siree! What I'm a-sayin' is, that that there baby is actin' just as a healthy, spunky boy baby oughter act!" "Tell you, fellers, that sounds the purtiest of anythin' I've heerd sence I left ol' Missouri! It makes me think a heap 'bout home, it does for a fac'!"

Marienella's feet hardly had time to touch the ground, she was so busy with the thousand and one things that needed to be done for the child and for Anna and me.

Marienella is used to caring for children, for her mother has nine younger than she!

"Surely yes, there is always a baby! I take care of it while my mother she make the tortilla, and plow garden, and raise chicken for to sell to the caravan. *Por cierto!* most particular it is to raise chicken — they die most easy! But the babies,

I tend them and they grow like the flowers — so strong — so pretty!"

The men were still gathered together discussing the new arrival in camp, when Auguste and Franchy came up to Hiram's wagon. They evidently had something important to say. They hesitated, and made two or three different beginnings, when Franchy spoke out, abruptly, hurriedly:

"It be dis-a-way! We been t'inkin', Auguste an' me, 'bout Joe-Lu! Nevair was no boy lak 'im, w'ite lak anybody, inside, nevair lak no black man, no slave! You know 'bout dat! We be dat glad to see 'im, w'en we come back from Bent's Fort, same lak 'e be real broder! We nevair know 'ow much we t'ink of 'im, till dat time w'en we be away from 'im, an' den we pound 'im on de back, lak anyt'ing, an' we tell 'im, 'You goin' be rich, an' famous, too, you rascal Joe-Lu! You goin' to go to Paree!' We tell 'im, 'We give you de money, your share in de goods we sell, so you go 'cross de sea to France!'

"We plan to do dat fo' 'im, an' 'e dat glad! Den we go up de mountain trail, an' t'ink no danger, — an' John Randall call an' 'e go to 'im, — an' wrastle wid Arandez — an' now 'e be gone! Poor Joe-Lu! An' it be lak dis! We cain't nevair touch dat money dat was for to be Joe-Lu's, — not if you will

take it fo' de babee, an' maybe name de babee fo' Joe-Lu, eh? Das w'at we want know! Not de name Joe-Lu jus' so, but Joseph Louis, eh? Dat name soun' good, an' all right, maybe, fo' your li'l boy? So dat dey be someone to keep de memory — so de name not die. De feedle it go wid de name, — an' maybe de li'l Joseph Louis 'e take to dat feedle, learn to play 'im. Dat be de bes' t'ing yet eef some day we come to see dat beeg boy, an' 'e play fo' us! Dat be fine, eh, Auguste? More fine as anyt'ing in dis worl'! You not t'ink dat all foolish, eh?"

Hiram looked at Anna. There was no doubt of the answer they would give, and they never thought even once about the money, I am sure! Anna said softly, "Joseph Louis, — and we could call him just Louis while he is little, couldn't we?" So it was decided. And then with Auguste and Franchy and me for witnesses, Deacon Gentry took the child in his arms, and touched its brow with water, and gave it the name — Joe-Lu's name — Joseph Louis Hubbard.

And the beautiful christening-robe, made from the holy altar-cloth! We never thought of it till long after the ceremony was over.

CHAPTER XXXV

STAINED WITH A BLOOD STAIN

ERNST is asking me to go with him when he goes down into Mexico, and that means that we must be married almost at once! I am not ready for that. I ought not to have to think of marriage so soon — when I have only just begun to think of love!

"Marriage," Uncle Pliny once explained to me, when he was talking of his "darter Loretty," "is a mighty serious preposition, best way you take it! Folks is borned different, and raised different, and for any two to think they can go and get along together all their days without some strainin' of their tempers an' their feelin's — why, it ain't to be did, an' that's all they is to it! The woman has to give up a lot of her idees, an' the man has to change his way of thinkin' jest as much! They's a lot fur them to larn, an' more fur 'em to unlarn, before they can get to be right comfort'ble together! That's the way it has got to be with every married pair, I reckon!"

If that is what marriage means one surely ought to give herself time to think, before she takes the irrevocable step.

That sounds selfish and cold and unkind — and I do not want to be that, when it is Ernst that is concerned. I do love and trust him unreservedly, and I know what my answer will be. If he thinks we ought to be married at once, I ought not to wish to say no.

At noon to-day the caravan halted on the bank of a little mountain stream that slipped through a green meadow, quiet and still, so narrow we could make the jump from bank to bank. Shallow and innocent looking it was, but the ice-cold noiseless current has dragged more than one man down to death, the men say. Along the course of the brook were straggling clumps of thin willows, and near the camp was a group of young mulberry trees, all thickly canopied with the wild-grape vine, forming a natural leafy arbor. I was swinging in a hanging loop of the knotted branches, and John and the Deacon were discussing the trip into Mexico, when John suddenly turned to me and said, in father's own manner:

"There is one thing that's wrong, Deya. You ought to be going with us, and you could if

you would! You could marry Ernst, and then you would not have to go back to Illinois alone, without Anna or me. That's going to be lonesome for you, and I don't think that mother would like it. You'll be going one way, and we going the opposite, and anything might happen to either of us and the other one wouldn't know anything about it. There isn't any need of it! The thing for you to do is to marry Ernst, and go with us. I know he'd be more than glad!"

I did not want the Deacon to hear. I did not want him, or any stranger, to speak of this, till Ernst and I should have settled it between us. The Deacon is very conveniently deaf, at times, but this was not one of those times, and he interrupted John without apology.

"Such talk is foolish! Young people are getting more and more heedless, with every year that passes, it seems to me. Marriage is a solemn obligation, — not to be lightly considered or entered into without due preparation! And Deya is hardly more than a child, not by any means sedate enough to take upon herself the responsibilities of a wife! And if Ernst and she were thinking of being married, I doubt if a Protestant marriage could be properly performed in Santa Fé. And in any case Deya should be married at home, in her own church, with her

mother and sisters with her, in the presence of her own relatives and friends."

These were some of the things I had been saying to myself, but now, when the Deacon said them, they someway did not sound so convincing. He spoke with an air of finality, as if he had settled the question for good and all, — and that bad little imp of perverseness that is inside of me began to urge me to take a contrary view.

I wanted time to think it all over. I wanted to be alone. I would not let even John go with me when I rode out across the marshy meadow. But the ride did not help me to think. It only tired me, so I was glad to turn my horse's head back to the camp. But I did not ride alone. The last part of the way I was attended by a company of Mexican soldiers who had ridden up from San Miguel to make inspection of our goods.

It was a very shabby company; the men were all rags and tatters, as regards the upper part of their bodies, and mostly bare skin from the thighs down! The young officer in command — a Captain Paost de Brys — was most civil, and made elaborate apologies for the bad appearance of his troop.

"They are good fellows, the very devils in a fight, but our government treats them most shabbily, as you see — to leave them half-clothed so, — it is

a shame! And the weapons, even, are what they have taken from the thieves and desperadoes with whom they have fought!"

As I was proceeding in leisurely fashion to our part of the camp, I heard Captain de Brys explaining to Captain Harrod that it was not ordinarily the duty of the soldiery to make inspection for the customs department; but that everything is at "sixes and sevens" in Santa Fé, because of the serious illness of the *Gobernador*, and that he should perform this duty was a personal request from his uncle the Chief of Customs, the Señor Don Francisco de Velasco, "a noble of the old blood of Spain, and a man of the most honorable!"

De Brys explained to Captain Harrod about the tribute that would be exacted of us by the officials of the towns through which the caravan will pass.

"Yes, there is money that must be scattered with a liberal hand. It is, to speak in plain terms, bribe-money, no less. Yet it is the custom in this, our unfortunate country, a custom that must be followed if one wishes to do business with our people. The underlings in the offices at Santa Fé would not think they could put the scratch of pen to paper unless their itching fingers were salved with your gold; and not only that, but every petty

official in every little village will expect to be substantially remembered. If your donation is satisfactory they will be anxious to give you of their services, but if not, they will hinder and cause you trouble at every turn. Accident after accident, and no one upon whom to fix the blame! A deplorable condition! Yes, but so it has been with us these many years!"

He went on to say that no portion of this money would be received by the Chief of Customs, the Señor de Velasco. Oh, no!

"It is for those of another sort — for those who must live on insufficient salaries! They are not so much to blame, for if they receive not these donations they starve! Perhaps it would be more satisfactory to you if two of your own men should go with us, and themselves see to it that the gold is distributed as I say."

I did not stay to listen any further, but rode across to the grape-vine arbor, for I was wearied, and anxious about other things. I stood by Aguilita's side, and idly enough I passed my hands over the saddle bags. There was a sound of broken glass, clink, clink, that aroused my curiosity. Cautiously I thrust my hand into the deep leather pocket. I found in it a broken liquor-flask, tobacco, and a purse that held a few Mexican gold-pieces. Then

I thought, all at once, what saddle this was. It was the one that had been on Aguilita when we came down from Eagle Mountain. It was Arandez's saddle! I was strangely excited. I felt that there was some other discovery waiting for me. In the very bottom of the bag was something soft and silkily slimy — something that crackled. I drew out a package, stained with a brown stain, a package done up in a dirty wisp of silk! This must be the package of which José-Marie had spoken — I was sure of it! — the package which that old Mexican Señor, the one who was stabbed in Westport, had worn about his waist!

I opened it — documents stained and yellow with age! Yes! A map showing a lake with four rivers flowing into it, and a red cross, marking the entrance to the "Glorieta" mine!

I stared at the old papers dumbly! The thought flashed into my mind, "If no one has a better right why shouldn't this treasure be mine?" But it left me quicker than it had come, — and left me sick with repulsion! Crime-stained, blood-stained! I would have naught to do with it! The sooner it was out of my hands the better! I wrapped it again in its ragged covering, and hid it in the folds of my skirt, when I heard someone coming. It was only John, — and I told him what I had found, and

we agreed that we would put the package in Captain Harrod's hands at once.

We found him talking with the young *Capitan* Paost de Brys; but I told him there was something of importance that he ought to know, and I tried to explain about the map and the letters that were with it. I suppose he thought it was a foolish girl's foolish story, — until I gave him the package, when he unwrapped it, and saw for himself the documents it contained.

Besides the map there were other papers, copies of formal deeds and letters, written in the ancient Latin characters. He called to Ernst to aid him in translating, and together they went over them line by line.

They were both satisfied that there could be no doubt as to the genuineness of the old parchments — no doubt as to their value. And a conversation they had with Paost de Brys convinced them that there was a living heir to the property — that same Señor Don Francisco de Velasco of whom he had previously spoken. And this Don Francisco de Velasco is brother to that old man who had come to his death at the hands of Arandez and his companions in Westport.

The subordinate officers were left to complete the inspection of our goods; but Captain de Brys

turned and rode back swift as his horse could carry him to Santa Fé, to communicate the astonishing news to the old Spanish aristocrat, the Señor de Velasco! I suppose he has a wife and family, and that they will rejoice over the fortune that will be theirs — a fortune beyond imagining, if the accounts of the past production of the mine are to be believed. And they will not have heard José-Marie's horrible story — but as for me, I am glad to put the whole subject out of my mind!

Marienella was doing our little washing, quite as if she were at home in her mother's house; and I sat on an upturned tub and starched and patted, and patted and starched our aprons and dresses, while she hung out the plain things on the line. And when everything was done, she came and sat by me, and she looked at me shyly, and twisted her fingers in the ruffles of my gown.

"There is something I think I want to tell you, very funny, — so it will make you laugh, — because I be so silly, and not know, — something about — I know not if I can tell you! I not tell Rob, — not never!"

I thought I knew her little secret! She has been teaching Rob to speak her language, and a very amusing study the romantic Spanish language can

be under certain circumstances, when the teacher is so lively and eager and earnest, and the pupil so purposely slow and stupid! They have been fathoms deep in love with each other, ever since they first saw each other — of that I was sure! — but I did not guess what it was she wanted to tell me!

"Rob he say we be married — soon! Yes, before we come to Santa Fé! So when we go into that city where sister of my father live, my Rob and me, we be *'sposo* and *'sposa* — husband and wife. Those the most sweetest words in the world, is it not so? Yes, and there be something else — only it be such shame to me! You will never say it to my Rob, for I would not he should know of the foolishness of me! It is — that I do not know *Americano* custom of marriage, how *Americano* call themselves marry! I confess before you, I think Rob same as marry me, when he only ask me go to be maid to you! Yes, I not know any better! My father, and my mother, and my sisters, they think so too! Surely! In this country the people not rich, and often they not afford to be priest-married. That cost, and money is not! Afterward, long time afterward, when they save what is required, they get marry by Padre, and make great big party! It nice to be marry like that, when they can afford it, but it happens not so, not at first.

They must marry more cheap. So man he give little money to father and mother. They put daughter's hand in his, and give to both of them the kiss of blessing! Then they be just like married! Everyone know that!

"That day when *Americano* come to our house — choose me out from the others — put the money on the table — and motion many motions, and talk all time loud and louder — we not know what he say, we think it declamation to marry! I proud he choose me, he so big, so strong, look so nice, I not think anything but to say yes! My mother very proud, too! They tell everyone I am wife of rich *Americano!*

"When I see what mistake it is, I cry *mucho, mucho!* But I laugh pretty soon — I know it be all right! First *Mexicano* word Rob learn to say is, 'I want you for wife!' Is it not most wonderful, — most beautiful? I would not have my father's sister, my aunt, in Santa Fé, to know of mistake my mother think, and me! No! so we be really marry with ring, — husband and wife — before ever they see us, and they never know. I show them that ring — and some day I show my mother that ring, too! She almost die with pride and joy!

"And this also I wish to ask you. Sometime when we go back to Westport, where Rob's Aunt

Jeannie lives, will she be glad and proud for that we marry, — will she think me nice wife for her nephew, the Señor Don Rob MacLeod?"

I put my arms around her and told her what I am sure is perfectly true — that everyone, when they see her and come to know her, will be pleased, and that Aunt Jeannie will love her dearly.

Her cheeks blushed red as a poppy, and she laughed delightedly, and darted off to be with her Rob. Later I saw her perched on the back of one of the oxen he was driving, and I could only suppose that she was hearing him say his lesson — "I love — You love — We love!"

CHAPTER XXXVI

A TRUE-LOVE KISS

I THOUGHT that things in camp were unusually and superlatively quiet. There is always a reason for everything, and the reason for this state of affairs is that Danny is no longer with us. He and Stoneman have been sent on ahead to Santa Fé with Captain de Brys. In going through Las Vegas they must have stopped long enough to give a very good impression of the caravan, — or possibly Danny and Stoneman, who were deputized to be the distributors of our largesse, were particularly generous in their gifts to the *Alcalde* and *Padre.* Whatever the cause, the officials made high festival of our arrival in Las Vegas. A salute was fired from guns on the church walls. The streets were jammed with people of the lower class; the roofs crowded with *caballeros* and ladies, who threw flowers and confetti in our path; and everywhere everyone was shouting "*Los Americanos! Los Americanos! La entrada de la Caravana!*"

Mexicans, *mestizos*, and Indians swarmed about us, offering us everything conceivable in the way of eatables and drinkables, — water cool as the snows of Mount Mora, melons and apricots, onions and beans, *frijoles* and *chili con carne*. We kept on purchasing long after we were supplied with what we needed, it seemed so impossible to refuse them!

A brood of half-naked little brown rascals dashed at the carriage and fairly overwhelmed us. We held our breath, we were so sure they would be caught under the wheels and crushed, but they feared nothing. They climbed up the legs of the mules, they gathered like swarms of bees on the sides of the carriage, and filled it to overflowing. Only Marienella knew how to rid us of them! Unceremoniously she tumbled them out on the hard ground, and when they clung to the bows she "smacked" their bare legs till they were glad to let go. We threw some pennies out and they scrambled for them in the dirt, and put them, dirt and all, into their mouths, and then ran off shrieking and laughing.

The women must have heard about the beautiful Americano baby in our carriage, for they crowded around, begging to see "*un bonito niño*, the sweet baby!" Anna stood up in the carriage and held up the boy, that they might gaze upon him. I

know that never in their lives had they gazed upon so lovely a picture. The sun shone full upon her, making her dazzling fairness seem yet more fair, and the baby's locks and her own bright tresses caught the sun's rays and shone like spun gold! With her blue veil blowing about her, and the glory of the sun upon her, she did look like the holy pictures of the saints in church and chapel, before which these women had been accustomed to kneel in prayer.

As soon as we were fairly settled in camp a deputation of the principal citizens called upon us. They were most polite and courteous, assuring us that all the town and all the people in it were entirely at our service. A poor trifle in the way of entertainment had been provided — a fandango at the dance-hall, a theatrical performance in the Plaza, — the citizens would receive as an evidence of friendly feeling if we would so far honor them as to attend these festivities.

Farrell and John and Ernst and I are going together. I would not think of dancing, but after they have made preparation for us, it would seem uncivil if we absented ourselves. Farrell says he will wear his dress suit and his lemon-colored kid gloves! I suppose I ought to array myself in my

one real party gown, the red plaid silk with which sister Lucy so thoughtfully provided me.

I did not wear the silk gown after all, but only my pink sprigged lawn, which Anna said was quite pretty enough for the occasion.

It was not yet dark when the people began to assemble at the dance-hall. The church-bells were rung to call the crowd together. The hall was a dirty, low-ceilinged room, lighted with torches as well as candles. When we arrived the air was filled with a haze of flying dust — and with the odors of onions and peppers, and other odors not so wholesome! Everything was dirty as possible — walls and floor — and even the people in their *fiesta* attire were not clean! But the music was enchanting!

The sweet thrumming of the guitars, the low, rich notes of the violas, the soaring, vibrant tones of the violins, — it was all so captivating to the senses, we were ready to declare the whole scene as lovely as it was bizarre and strange.

There were people of every class present, chatting familiarly together: the *Alcalde* and the ladies of his family, the *Curé* and the *Padre*, and their nieces, *caballeros* in velvet and lace, saucy, ragged Mexican beauties, and vagabondish youths in tawdry finery. Coquettish glances and bewildering smiles,

like winged darts, flew recklessly in every direction, glances and smiles meant not for any particular one, but for any who might chance to be in the way of them.

In the intervals between the dances the girls, panting from the rapid motion, flushed from the intoxication of the music, sat on the benches ranged around the room, laughing and chattering and gesticulating; eating and drinking everything offered them by their solicitous swains. Generously they shared their cakes and sugar-sticks with each other. For convenience' sake these dainties were carried about in their handkerchiefs, but not one refused them on that account. Custom makes almost anything seem right and proper.

We had not purposed to stay long at the dance-hall, and as soon as we could slip away from those in charge we did so. The musicians had been playing a gay "Rigadoon," but when we were well out in the middle of the room they changed all at once into the slow, langorous measures of Strauss's "Lorelei." Ernst's arm supported me, and we were swept along with the throng of the dancers in the delicious waltz. We went twice around the room. Then the players gradually increased the tempo. The waltz was degenerating into a giddy whirl, and Ernst would not let me dance any longer.

When we reached the door of the hall we missed Farrell Montgomery. A red-cheeked Señorita had captured him. He was following us, and was about to step out into the court-yard, when the pretty maiden slipped and fell at his feet. Of course he had to lift her up! And he had to go and get for her a cup of sweet wine! And he had to take her to her mother! And then he must ask her to dance when she felt that she had fully recovered from the effect of the accident. If Twank had not appeared upon the scene and taken the little lady off his hands, Farrell might have had to stay till the dance was over — perhaps a not unwilling captive. As it was, the Señorita of the rosy cheeks took and kept one of his lemon-colored gloves — to remember "the so happy occasion!"

Three Spanish youths in picturesque attire were waiting to show us the way to the Plaza, where the theatrical performance was to be given. We were surprised to find that it was to be literally and exactly *in the Plaza!* There was no opera-house. There was no theater building. The only stage was the porch in front of the tavern. The pit, the dress-circle, the balcony and the gallery, all were on the same level, and that was the level of the pavement. The audience were seated on the ground — señores, señoras, *muchachos*, *muchachitas*, tod-

dling babies, pet dogs, stray goats, and sleepy pigs!

The "boxes" reserved for us as the guests of honor were only benches covered with tapestries and rugs. Instead of footlights and big chandelier, there were torches placed on each side of the stage.

The stage manager must have been waiting our arrival, for as soon as we were seated the bugle blew a long note and the heavy curtains were drawn back. Two toreadors, from Spain, went through the evolutions of the bull-fight, but with wholly imaginary bulls as their victims.

The stage had no charms for me; I was too much engaged in watching the people around me. Never before had I seen an assemblage like this. Ernst's eyes met mine with a smile, as together we noted the rapt absorption of the people in the doings on the stage — their unconsciously uttered exclamations, their sympathetic, responsive gestures. An enthusiasm so genuine is contagious, and I was preparing to enjoy the mimic bull-fight with them, when I noticed Iggy Beauchemie making his way through the crowd to us, trying by signs to make Ernst understand that he was wanted. The surveyors, whom Ernst met up in the Raton mountains, had just arrived in camp, and they had asked that Ernst be sent for at once as they were in haste to go

on to Santa Fé. Ernst made excuses to the *Alcalde*, and followed Beauchemie out of the Plaza, and only Enos Quackenbos and John were left to look after Deya.

I wished that I might have left the theater with Ernst. I was really weary. The wind that swept through the Plaza was sharp and cool, and I shivered as I drew my shawl closer around me. I thought regretfully of the big campfire, and wished I were there, curled up at Anna's feet, with nothing to do but watch the bright flames.

I was startled by the clashing of the heavy rings as the curtains were again drawn back. The drama, "Dolores," the main performance of the evening, was about to begin. I did not expect to be greatly interested, but my attention was caught and held from the very first. Someway it seemed not at all like acting. The little actress who played the part of Dolores was truly a person of genius. When the curtains were drawn aside we saw her, — a little ragged girl playing with the children of the street. She was capricious, tantalizingly sweet and bewitching, and naughty! She wanted to be so! It was such fun to tease the poor water-carrier who loved her so humbly and so devotedly! She laughed at him! She made him believe such a very foolish story — she wrote him a note saying

that she had been carried off by the brigands of the mountains, by Massaroni and his band — who had not been seen in their old haunts for years! He thought it was true, and she wickedly laughed at his simplicity. From her hiding-place she watched him follow the trail she had marked out for him, to Massaroni's secret cave. Oh, indeed it was most amusing to fool the poor boy! Then she learns that the brigands have really returned, — and she realizes that she has sent her Sanchez into the very den of the thieves. His life will pay the forfeit of her folly! They will think him a spy. They will surely kill him!

A storm of passion overwhelmed her. In the agony of that moment she became a woman, a woman who loved deeply and truly. She resolves to follow the path she had marked out for her lover. She will save him, or die with him! He must not die till she has told him that she loves him — has always loved him!

Her dark eyes, lustrous, magnificent, fiery, swept across the sea of faces in the Plaza: they flashed a single piercing beam into my own eyes, into my very heart, and from that moment I was no more myself — I was that Dolores!

Her face, now irradiated with hope, now darkened by despair, is turned to the mountain. The way

is rough that she must travel. The rocks are high and threatening where she must pass. She stumbles through tangled thickets. She loses herself in interminable forests. What is this? "A scarf that Sanchez has worn!" Yet he is not here! She is always — and always — just one little minute too late! I forget that all this is not really true, I forget that this is a stage picture. Dolores is myself, it is my heart that is wrung with anguish, and fear, and sense of utter loss! I cannot bear it, and I turn away my face that I may not see the tragedy that I feel is impending.

There is a rapturous cry, a cry of joy! She sees her beloved! He is yet alive, though in the hands of the brigands. Ah! it is Massaroni who first beholds her. He stabs Sanchez to the heart, and flings him upon the stones. She is there to receive him, to cradle him in her arms, to weep over him, to kiss his pale brow.

The torches that had lighted the stage flared in the strong night-wind, flickered, and went out. Only the moon's pale beams fall upon her, as she kneels by the side of her beloved.

"Sanchez! Sanchez! I am here! Your own Dolores! Dost thou not hear me when I say I love thee? I love thee, O my love! forever and forever! In life, in death, I love thee! Thou

hearest me not! Thy lips have no kisses of love and forgiveness for me! I hold thee to my heart — but never, oh, never, wilt thine arms enfold me in love's embrace! Thou dost not know! Thou wilt never know! Yet I will join thee, where thou art, my dear one! Tarry only one moment, till I make my peace with God! Then I will go with thee — to be with thee, forever!"

The moon shone upon her uplifted face. She signed herself with the sign of the cross. Lovingly and tenderly and slowly she withdrew the dagger from his yet warm heart — and suddenly, swiftly, she drove it to the hilt in her own breast!

Oh, even now I cannot think of it! It is not right to think of such things, and it was not true. It was not true — though it seemed like truth. The world of tragedy and pain and loss is not the real world. The real world, thank God! is a happy world! And my love is mine, — only waiting for me to give my heart into his keeping! So I said, over and over again to myself, as John and I made our way back through the silent crowd, through the silent streets, till we reached the circle of the camp.

The fire was blazing bright and high, and there was Anna playing with the little Louis, tossing him as she sang "Rockabye Baby on the Tree Top,"

and she looked up at Hiram and laughed as the boy sprang almost out of her arms! They were so absorbed in each other they did not see me, or guess that I was there. A mist clouded my eyes. There was an aching void in my heart, a wound that would not be healed. I wanted to see Ernst, I wanted to ask him to forgive me for being cold and selfish — unloving. I saw him pacing up and down, and as if my feet had wings I went to him. I was gathered close — close — to his breast. Of my own will I kissed him — the first true-love kiss my lips had ever given him, the kiss that a maiden should give to the one to whom she has given her heart, to whom she has promised herself.

That kiss meant many things. In it was the memory of all I had just witnessed — despair and fear, and a strange rapture that had never stirred in my heart till then. I tried to tell him all I felt in a single word. It was just his name — Ernst, Ernst! — that I uttered; that was all, yet he knew!

He asked me no question, but I answered him, as if he had, "Yes, oh, yes!" And I whispered the words that Dolores had said — they belonged to me! "I love thee, my love! In life, in death, I love thee!" And without further speech we knew that for us there would be no more parting.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE OWNER OF THE MINE

AROUND us are the towering masses of the mountains, bold, bare, jagged peaks, high shaggy hills covered with thick forests. Some of these steep hills we have to climb; sometimes there are deep rifts and chasms through which we pass from one fertile valley to another.

As we come near the towns we find rich fields and gardens carefully tended. On garden walls and on the roofs of the low-built houses, the prickly pear grows, and its bright blossoms help to make the bare, blank walls seem not quite so ugly and forbidding. In the States the poorest villages are pretty, but the towns here have no redeeming features. There are no separate houses, with neat piazzas, glass-paned windows; no strip of green lawn and double row of flowers along the front walk. There is nothing but bare road and bare, prison-like walls on either side. The grated windows are few and small and far between. The big double doors that give access to the court-yards are like rough barn-doors, and the court-yards are

like barn-yards, for the stables and the cow-pen and the pig-pen open upon them — the living-rooms of the family, also!

The women are frowzy and dirty, but they know how to drape their *rebosas* gracefully about them, and each wears a flower in her hair. They seem bright and vivacious and good tempered, and the young girls are, almost all of them, beautiful.

It is impossible to realize that these people, who crowd around us with smiles and compliments, can be the hard, wickedly cruel creatures of whom we read and hear. But, as Uncle Pliny says:

"You-all ain't noticin' that it is mostly women and children that we sees. They is plenty of ugly cut-throats what's standin' back, an' sayin' nothin', only they takes good care to pocket the money we hands out so free an' plenty.

"Some of 'em 's right desprit fellers, an' they ain't no tellin' what devilment they won't be up to. And even the littlest ones ain't none too good. They'd steal the nuts off'n the wagons, if we didn't keep our eyes peeled! An' them bigger ones — over yander, with the fishpoles on their shoulders, — well, it ain't ten minutes ago that I ketched them very boys a-throwin' their fish-hooks into the back of my grocery wagin, a-haulin' out whatever come! They got my wammus, an' thar they was, a-quar-

relin' over the money that was in the pockets, an' not a bit flustered when I tackled 'em 'bout sech bare-faced stealin'. 'Found it in the road!' they kept sayin', an' that were all the satisfaction that was to be got out'n them.

"Tell you! These here mixed bloods — half Spanish an' half Portugee, an' half Injun or nigger, an' Lord knows what else!— they's a mighty bad prep'sition! Born without'n no moral sense, so they don't know what right an' wrong is. An' I'm a-tellin' you, when I think 'bout this here Mexico country a-tryin' to be a Republic like our'n, I says to myself, 'For the Lord's sake, however can they expect to run a Gov'ment, with critters like these here a-votin'!' Like the Israelites of old, I reckon they'll have to serve their 'prenticeship to decency, forty year a-wanderin' in the Wilderness, with the Lord's chastenin' hand heavy upon them, before ever they'll be fitten to govern theirselves. That is how the Deacon sizes it up, an' I 'grees with the Deacon."

Here, at San Miguel, there is an ancient Pueblo village, which I very much wished to visit. It is built tier on tier, terrace above terrace, with ladders going from one story to another, with cistern-lids in the roofs, to serve as doors to the rooms beneath.

I wanted to ask the Indian girls how they managed to get water enough to do house-keeping with, up those ladders, up to the fifth story! I wanted to go through the better part of the town, where the Spanish fort and Chapel and the old Spanish residences were grouped together; but we were too late in arriving to permit of sight-seeing excursions, and they say we are to leave here before daylight to-morrow morning, so we may reach Santa Fé if possible on Saturday night.

Who has been here but that august personage himself, the Señor Don Francisco de Velasco! He came, he saw, he departed, taking with him those documents in regard to the "Glorieta" mine, which of course rightfully belong to him! I think Captain Harrod must have had some communication from him before he arrived, some proof of the legality of his claim to the papers, for when he made his appearance all this seemed to be perfectly understood between them.

He is an aristocratic and stately old Spaniard, a person of intellect and power. The three friends who came with him treated him with a respect that could not be exceeded if he were of the blood royal! He was really gentle in manner, and suave and courteous, as a royal prince is supposed to be.

I was startled when Captain Harrod suddenly appeared beside me, and thrust that package into my hands, the package which I already knew too well, and said:

"This was of your finding. It is for you to give it into the keeping of the Señor de Velasco. He is the head of the Velasco family, the descendant in direct line of the Luis de Velasco who was sole owner of the 'Glorieta.' The papers belong to him, and he desires to receive them from your hands!"

I could not refuse; I could not think what to say. As the Señor bowed his courtly bow, I awkwardly held out the packet, and he took it with an eagerness that he could not altogether repress. He looked at me and tried to smile nonchalantly. "How is one to believe that anything so wonderful should happen?" But even as he spoke, his hands were tearing at the wrappings, his eye, sharp and brilliant as the eye of a hawk, was darting from page to page.

"Even if I wished to disbelieve I could not. It is even as Paost de Brys assured me."

He showed the old and yellowed map.

"This lake of the four rivers — the hill of the broken peak — the two pine-trees! This place we know. I, myself, have hunted over every foot of it. At night my tent has been raised between those

two great pines — over the spot where is the secret entrance to the 'Glorieta,' as the cross on the map, here, shows. This letter written by the slave, Juan! We know of Juan, the faithful one who helped his master Luis de Velasco to escape to Spain, when other Spanish landholders were murdered in their beds. Yes, surely, this is written in the records of the family. Also we know of the mine — the great riches of it! We think it lost forever, for when the revolution is crushed, and the family return to this country, there was naught to show where it had been, no records left, the stupid sullen slaves silent as the grave. It was a legend only, to tell the children, for them to build foolish, never-to-be-realized hopes upon.

"And that the dream should at last come true — that the ancient documents of proof should have been, in some strange way, preserved, and thus strangely recovered, and given to us of the fifth generation! It is a miracle! — a miracle in very truth!"

He looked up and brushed his hands across his eyes, as if he were dazzled by a blinding light.

"Yes, Señores," and his utterance was rapid and broken, "yes, you may understand, that at the first when de Brys first told me of these things, I thought he was drunken, crazed. Yet as he spoke, more

and more the truth made itself apparent. In my heart I believed. At his beseeching I sent him, with a few whom I could trust, to uncover the mine, to burrow under the sliding rock to discover the entrance. There is no doubt! They will find it! Within the fortnight the 'Glorieta' will be again open, her treasures uncovered, brought out into the light of day!"

He staggered as if he were overcome with wine.

"Pardon me, I am overwrought. So much of joy the heart unsustained may not bear!"

He was not ashamed to kneel there, before us all, and murmur a prayer of thankfulness and praise to God, the Virgin, and the saints. And he did not rise, until he had quite regained his composure.

And then he drew me to him and kissed my brow, and he held me by the hand while he endeavored to express the gratitude that burdened his heart. In the extravagant Spanish way of speaking, he protested that all he had, all he ever expected to have, I and my friends were to consider as our own.

He, his wife, his sons, and all who belonged to him, were our servants to command!

"Indeed, I speak but the plain truth when I say to you that if I were to spend a lifetime in the effort to serve you, it would be recompense inadequate for this that I have received from your hands.

There are many who if they had found the map — the papers — would have kept the secret, that they might secure for themselves the treasures of the mine. So it might have been done, and no one would have known! No one could have called you to account! Such generosity — such high sense of honor! When de Brys tell me, I say, 'It is difficult to believe!' There are no words that I can say, only that I must not forget to say the words my wife, the Doña Felda, put in my mouth to say to the young Señorita. Oh, surely she knows of you, all that Paost de Brys could tell her, — and he has eyes, yes, indeed! And I am to say to you that she will be of a desolateness, so she would wish to die of grief and shame, if you should deny her, when she begs of you that you will make our house your home, to remain with us as our honored guest, our beloved daughter, during your stay in our city. There are relatives already summoned from Chihuahua, and Santa Rosalia, nephews and nieces, who will help to make the time pass pleasantly for you. Oh, there will be feasting and merry-makings, I promise you!"

I looked across to Ernst and smiled. The Señor's piercing black eyes intercepted the glance, — and he did not need to be told that all that concerned me, concerned Ernst also. If I had been, indeed,

his own daughter, he could not have been more delighted, more thoughtful and considerate! He questioned Ernst, and when he found the wedding is to be so soon, he asked permission to attend to the necessary preliminary formalities. As Deacon Gentry had said, it is an affair of some little difficulty for a Protestant to be properly married in this Catholic country, — but through the Señor's influence it can be arranged.

He is taking on his shoulders all of our perplexities. The Captain's face showed the relief he felt when Velasco undertook to arrange the matter that brought Captain Harrod to the West — the settlement of the Olivarez estate, and the protection and care of Inez, Olivarez's little daughter. She is to be taken from the nunnery, where she is held as a prisoner, and adopted into the Velasco family.

"Always has the Doña Felda lamented that there was no daughter, no sister, to grow up with our two sons. She will rejoice to receive this little one, —and as to the property of her father, Manuel Olivarez, it is confiscate to the Mexican government. And here, too, I am in a position to help you. It was through a conspiracy of Armijo and others of his sort that the theft was accomplished. Armijo is ill, very ill indeed; and in the conduct of my own business I have been obliged to examine

all papers, even those of the *Gobernador*. The evidence is there where I can lay my hands upon it — yes, I have the papers to prove what I say.

"For the Señor Harrod it would be better that he should go down into Mexico with his friend, the Señor Breunner. Surely, yes! I will put those papers of which I speak into your hands, and you shall take them and give them to Santa Anna. You shall make statement to him. What is to be done in Santa Fé, I will attend to that. It will be well that you do not appear in the city, so it will not be thought that there is an inquiry in progress. From this place, San Miguel, you can cross over by the White Lakes to San Pedro, and wait your party there. There will be no mischance to the caravan, because of your absence. An escort of cavalry from the fort will easily be secured.

"Yes, indeed! We will wrest this inheritance of the little Doña Inez from the hands of those who would rob her. The sum is of a largeness to justify our efforts to secure it. Also, it will be of the greatest pleasure to me, that I cross this *Gobernador* in his wicked plans. So I repay him for the thousand slights and humiliations he has put upon me. Me! The true descendant of the Velascos, in whose presence he is not worthy to appear! Ah, you do not know what he is, or how our city has been given

over to the spoiler. So much of cruelty! So much of treachery! Such breaking of solemn oaths! Such profligacy in the high places of government! Armijo shall receive a rebuke from Santa Anna. Yes, Santa Anna has the power, if he chooses to exercise it, to curb and check, to put the iron bit in his mouth. It is to the influence of the Velascos, and their friends, that Santa Anna owes it, this power, so he will not wish to deny me any favor I ask him. Yes, you will see! This much I may surely promise you."

Ernst and the Captain and the Señor Velasco have gone over to the Fort for a conference with the officers there. Captain Harrod did not think to give us the opportunity to bid him farewell. We will not see him again till we arrive in San Pedro, on our way to Mexico.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE BLESSING OF THE CARAVAN

WHEN the escort of soldiers, whom Señor de Velasco had arranged for, came into camp at daybreak this morning, they found the wagons ready to "string out" and start. The men are more and more eager to get on, and "make time," but it is a case of "the more haste, the less speed." There were three break-downs, from carelessness and reckless driving, before the caravan had gone three miles.

The wagons could only creep along when we came to Cañoncita Pass, the path was so rough. All the light there was, was the little that filtered in through the heavy foliage of the pine-trees that edged the canyon. It was cold and damp down there and Ernst and I mounted our ponies, and rode on ahead, up into the sunshine. We passed along close to the brink of dizzy precipices, where a little misbehavior on the part of the horses would have sent us to our death. I could hardly believe the road was wide

enough for the wagons — I was sure there was not an inch to spare.

The teams that travel these dangerous roads must all wear bells, as warning to others who may wish to pass them on the narrow road. "Up-going teams, straight ahead! Down-going teams, pull out and wait." This is the rule of the mountains, a necessary rule for the safety of all travelers.

Ernst and I had drawn rein, where a tiny thread of water trickled across the path. We watered the horses, and sat down to rest there till the caravan should overtake us. We heard the grinding of wheels on stones, — and saw above us a string of Mexican carts rounding a curve in the road.

The track here was wide enough for passing, and we surely thought the carts would stop. We could hear plainly enough the bells of the caravan, sounding not so very far away. But the Mexican who was in charge of the little cavalcade was going right on, when Ernst spoke, explaining that it was a big caravan that was coming up the trail, and that the road was narrow further on. The surly fellow made us no answer, and he tried to urge his skinny ox-teams to a faster gait! He was in a wickedly ugly state of mind. He swore at the boys that were driving the teams. He kicked the oxen in the sides. He beat the mule he was riding, and rowelled its

flanks unmercifully with his sharp pointed spurs. And when we tried to go by him, he would not yield us one inch of the way, and we had to dismount and lead the ponies by, along the slippery side-hill.

And the two caravans met, where the road was the narrowest, where there was no room for turning back, no room at all for passing. I asked myself, "What will they do? What can they do? They cannot go on, and they cannot stay here forever!" It made me think of that old puzzle question in the back of the Philosophy book: "When a body that is irresistible meets a body that is immovable what happens?" I have forgotten what the answer to that was, — but I know how our people solved their problem. Without heeding that Mexican any more than if he had been a wooden statue, they unhitched his teams from his carts, and set their own shoulders to the wheels, and backed them up that steep, steep hill till they came to a place wide enough for passing, and there they set them out at the side of the road and left them!

The Mexican was furious! He swore and swore — till his face was spotted and blotched from anger. He jerked at the reins of his mule so viciously that it reared and threw him. He was on his feet that very same instant, and when the poor frightened

beast did not rise, he drew his knife, a long ugly shining knife, and struck the animal in the neck, again and again! The blood spurted out, and dyed the ground red; and then he came to his senses, as if it was his brain that had been relieved by the blood-letting. He hurriedly snatched up dust from the road, and stuffed it into the open wounds, to stop the bleeding, and the trembling beast made an effort to get upon its feet; but in its struggle it slipped over the edge of the narrow path, and went crashing down, and lodged at last against an up-jutting rock, just where the cliff dropped perpendicularly to the river.

And now there was another Ernst there before me, in the place of my gentle Ernst. His cheeks blazed red! His voice was sharp and harsh! He seized that Mexican by his jacket and forced him over the brink, out upon the steep and slippery slope, not hesitating to follow him himself. He slipped a loop of a lazo-rope around the Mexican's arm and around his own waist to help him if he should stumble.

The two of them made their way down to the place where the mule was lying. Their dark forms showed sharply against the paleness of the distant valley — so far, so far, below! We held our breath as we looked! The mule was paralyzed with fright,

and the man was terror-stricken to the point of idiocy. He stood trembling while Ernst put the ropes around the mule's body and helped to lift it over the obstructing stones as our men drew it slowly upward. The Mexican was left to make the ascent the best way he could. Nobody gave any thought to him. But by the time the wounds were dressed, and the beast was on its feet, the Mexican was there, ready to climb again into the saddle; and he was such a pitiable figure, that Ernst helped him a little, and put the reins in his hands. And so the two, the abused mule, and the abusive Mexican, went along up the trail, to take their places beside the carts, there to wait the passing of the caravan.

It was long and tedious work, to wheel all those carts up the hill, and those of us who were not actively employed were given a little holiday time, till the bugle should summon us back to the wagons again.

High above us was a most enticing spot, a peaked point of rock, the very topmost bit of solid earth, for miles around. John said I must not try to go up there, but Ernst said I might, so I did. Ernst expected that I would let him almost carry me, — he is strong enough, but I knew I was able to climb

the rock, all by myself. It is surely with me as Uncle Pliny says:

"It ain't nowise a bad thing for a person to get into a cruel tight place, sometimes — ef they don't gin up, ef they goes through it with good courage. Seems like they is somethin' deep down in ever' one of us, stronger than we ordinary knows on. We gets into a hard place where they ain't seemin'ly any way out of, an' that strength comes a-surgin' up, an' we uses it reckless like, maybe, not knowin' how it is goin' to last us, an' somehow, it lasts us through. An' after we once gets a-holt of it, an' uses it that-a-way, it ain't never goin' to leave us. An' it helps us a heap of times, all through our lives."

The hill was steep above us, but it was not too difficult for me. We reached the topmost top, and found there a level place, almost big enough for half a dozen people to stand on, and a stone seat almost big enough, just big enough, for two!

The strong wind tried to lift us and carry us upward and away, but we were not ready yet to leave this beautiful earth.

Far below us lay the green valley, its bright colors and all its outlines softened and subdued by the tremulous heat waves that rippled in between. There was the sparkling river, winding in and out

between clustered groups of trees, and there were little villages with orchards and gardens, and, rising around us on every side, tree-clad hills thrusting themselves upward boldly, receding, melting through infinite gradations of tone and color into the masses of the distant mountain-peaks. Wandering filmy clouds floated over and around them till we could hardly discern which was cloud and which was mountain. One seemed as ethereal and unsubstantial as the other.

We had taken the first steps in the descent, when we heard Marienella's gay laugh. Rob was with her, and they showed us another way down, much easier than the way by which we had come. And Marienella and I went ahead, leaving the men to loiter as they would.

She chattered incessantly, but I knew that a part of her attention was given to what Rob was saying. Very particular and very private matters it was they were discussing, but Rob's voice is not a small one, and we did not need to lose a single word he said. He was inquiring how two people were to be married in this country, if one is Catholic and the other Scotch Presbyterian! Would it be the American Consul that would arrange it?

And then, as we stopped and waited for them, he went on:

"Marienella an' me, we are no goin' to wait till we get to Santa Fé to be marrit, ye ken. Na, na! The weddin' is to be in the camp before we come to the city. I'm no sae sma' that I needs to be a coward, in ordinar' cases, but it's a fearfu' thing to think o' me, wi' the lassie on my arm, a-walkin' up the aisle of they strange kirk, an' to hae a strange meenister or priest, or whatever, wi' his gew-gaw vestments on him, a-spierin' his questions at us, an' the strange folk a-lookin' on. It maks my knees to be a-clackin' togither wi' fear. I'm no denyin' of it. Na, na! We'll be marrit oot o' doors, unner God's blue sky! That is maist like hame to us, an' the men that we hae traveled wi' sae lang, they're maist like hame-folks. They will wish us, 'Joy be wi' ye!' an' mean it true, an' that is a gude beginnin.' We'll hae it done, wi' as little fuleishness of ceremony as may be, an' walk into the city, before the eyes of they stranger folk as man an' wife. That's what I tell't Marienella, an' that's the way as suits us both."

I repeated Rob's words, "Out of doors, under God's blue sky!" It *is* nearest like home, and those who have traveled with us so long are nearest like home folks. And Ernst said, "To be married without unnecessary formalities, to enter Santa Fé as husband and wife!" And so it was settled then and

there that the two weddings should take place at the same time. And Marienella will be bridesmaid to me, and I will be bridesmaid to her.

Anna and Marienella and Deya are deep in the discussion of "something to wear." Anna says the dresses must be white. Marienella suggests, "Pink is pretty." But we have finally all agreed that white will be nicest for our wedding gowns.

Deacon Gentry and I have been in consultation, and he is to be my envoy into Santa Fé, to buy what we need from the Santa Fé shops — a white dress and veil, and gloves and slippers, for me, and for the little girl who is to be Rob MacLeod's wife — it will be my wedding gift to her.

The Deacon is sure he can do the errand satisfactorily.

"I remember, as if it were yesterday, the gown that Susan wore the day we were married; and I think I can find something near enough like to that; and if I am puzzled I can go to the wife of the Señor de Velasco, and ask her to help me decide."

The Deacon is so much milder and kinder than he used to be — with me and with every one. I have noticed it ever since Anna's baby came to live with us.

The Indian women of the North have a pretty

custom, Ernst tells me, of walking around their cornfields in the dark of the moon. They call it, "The blessing of the cornfields." And with us it is as if Anna had taken her baby and made the triple-circle of the camp to invoke a blessing on the caravan, for everything has prospered with us since little Louis came.

CHAPTER XXXIX

LIKE A RIPE PLUM

WE have been told that we will not reach Santa Fé till Monday. The Sabbath will be spent on the hills outside of the city, and it is there that we will be married, Ernst and I, and Marienella and Rob. It is beautiful that it happens just so. It is all just as we would wish it to be.

The caravan is camped for the night here near the ancient village of Pecos close under the eastern tower of the ruined old temple. The Captain's two wagons were placed against the wall, with a double row of the Deacon's wagons outside to hide them from the view of the men of the camp. Secretly, working like moles in the dark, Auguste and Franchy and big Rob are now working, transferring guns and pistols and powder and ball to a vault or cistern that lies beneath the fallen stones of the tower.

The Spanish Lieutenant, with whom Señor de Velasco and Captain Harrod and Ernst were in conference at San Miguel, is superintending this

work. When Manuel Olivarez last year wrote to Mr. Harrod, asking him to assume the guardianship of Inez, he told him to bring to New Mexico ammunition and weapons for the arming of the American residents of Santa Fé. Olivarez felt that their lives were not safe from week to week, or from day to day. Since Olivarez's death, since Santa Anna has become President of the Republic, conditions have materially improved; yet de Velasco suggested that the weapons might not come amiss some day.

"Surely it will be well that they be where they will be easily obtainable. If they are hidden in this vault that I know of at old Pecos, they can be taken from there, a few at a time, and distributed among the law-abiding citizens, for the protection of themselves and their property, if the day should come when they might need protection!" he said.

This Lieutenant, whom Velasco engaged to accompany the caravan into Santa Fé, says it is whispered here and there, and among those who have reason to know of what they are speaking, that if the United States and Mexico declare war upon each other, New Mexico will be apt to ask to be taken into the sisterhood of the States, even as Texas is about to do. There are many American residents in New Mexico, and especially in Santa Fé. American sentiment is strong. The property

interests of the better class of the Mexicans are so bound up with those of the Americans that they will desire a closer union of the two peoples. And the citizens have been so shamefully tricked and betrayed by their Presidents, they have been so pillaged and plundered by the *Gobernadores* who have been set over them, that they would be glad of any change. They have confidence in the people of the States, and would rejoice openly to see the American flag floating above their *Gobernador's Palacio.*

"At the first shock of conflict, you may believe me, New Mexico will fall, like a ripe plum, into the lap of the United States! The tree will need no rude shaking — of itself the plum will fall! Some few of us within the inner circle, the circle where Velasco is leader, know these things are true, as I say! Armijo and his hirelings know nothing of this, they would tell you different, yet this is the very truth!"

These political matters are of vital interest to Ernst and to all those who are to make the journey into this country of Mexico.

A certain line of work was laid out for Ernst by the Baron von Munsterberg, and he will faithfully carry out the undertaking as it was planned! His instructions were to secure information in regard to

the treasures of ancient Mexico — to ascertain all that is known about the art and literature, and the habits and customs, of the early Spanish conquerors and of the Aztecs whom they conquered. But now, in addition to this, the avowed purpose of the expedition, something else is to be attempted. Maps are to be made of the country through which we are to travel, and as far as it may be possible, the minds and temper of both the leaders and the common people are to be studied: all of which will be embodied in a report for the use of the Government at Washington. This is as yet a time of peace, and it may now be safely done. Captain Harrod thinks that this secondary purpose may be the most valuable part of the work of the expedition, and to this end he is ready to devote all his private fortune.

The signal, "Lights out!" will sound in just a minute, and I fear I will not have time to write down what I have learned about this old ruin. I have heard many legends regarding it.

The Mexicans who live along the Pecos valley believe that there are seven of the ancient tribe of Pecos Indians living here in the Temple, hidden in the subterranean labyrinth of vaults and caverns; and that they still keep alive the sacred fire on the

altar in the innermost sanctuary, that they are still waiting for the coming of their king, Montezuma; that they still offer living human victims on that altar! They declare that they sometimes see, against the clear sky, the smoke of the sacrifice ascending, from some unlocated opening in the temple walls.

"No," they say, "we not go near that abhorred place! It is haunted by ghosts, — those seven, the last of their tribe. Like specters are they, — worse than the ghosts of those who are altogether dead!"

Every one avoids the place. Even our teamsters, those who know the country, would have liked to make objection to camping so near the walls.

Taps! Lights out!

CHAPTER XL

THE SECOND-SIGHT

ROB and Ernst and Deacon Gentry left the caravan at four o'clock this morning. They expect to spend the day in Santa Fé, and will meet us in camp this evening — the camp at "Rock Corral," eight miles out from the city.

After breakfast Marienella went over to the big wagon, Hiram's wagon, for her usual morning romp with baby Louis; and John and I followed. We were a very quiet little party. Anna was counting stitches in a fancy sock she was knitting for the baby. He was cuddled up like a little dormouse, in Marienella's arms, pretending to be asleep, and she did not dare to stir. I do not remember that any one said anything, except as John and I talked in lowered tones, in broken phrases, with long pauses in between, of the time when we were little tads back in York-State, and of the way we used to play. We used to have such good times together, and now those happy, careless days are

past. We like to see the shadow of them in memory's mirror, but we would not like to really live them again. The present has sweeter joys, — the future holds for us richer promises.

While we talked we saw two horsemen coming from the northwest, and it proved to be Danny and Stoneman, returning to us from Santa Fé.

Good-natured Danny did not seem good-natured at all! He came and helped me down from the wagon as soon as the caravan stopped, — and he was cross! He snappily told the boys that they needn't try to tell him anything — he already "knew a-plenty!"

"I met Ernst Breunner and the Deacon, down in the city, and they told me everything — all about this impromptu wedding, and all!"

He turned to me, and tried to make me believe that the black frown on his brow was real. I knew it was put on, and that he was smiling inwardly to himself all the time.

"You might have told me that you and Breunner were engaged, that's what you might! Of course it isn't any great surprise. I knew how 'twas going to turn out; 'twas plain enough. There's one thing, however, I wouldn't have guessed in a thousand years, and that is that you'd go and have a gipsy-wedding like this. It's absurd!"

I just told the young man that, on the contrary, it was the very nicest kind of a wedding.

"Ernst and I have only known each other as nomads and gipsies; why shouldn't we have a gispy wedding if it suits us?"

All he could say in reply was that our foolish romantic notions were making a lot of trouble "for a lot of people."

"And it's a disappointment to the Velascos. Yes, they're taking as much interest in the affair as if you belonged to them. They were going to make it a matter of state, and all the relatives from miles down the road have been summoned as witnesses of the ceremony! Of course they will be too late for the wedding, — but there will be the 'infair' afterwards, and all the post-nuptial festivities.

"Ernst and the Deacon said the wedding would be 'a simple ceremony.' You'll find out how 'simple' it's likely to be! When you are in Santa Fé, you must do as the Santa Féyans do. You'll have to have the services of a dozen dignitaries — the *Padre*, the *Curé*, the *Alcalde*, the notary and his clerk, the consul and his secretary, — and goodness knows how many others! And all of these 'll have to be received in style, and suitably entertained! And that's not all! The Señor and Señora de

Velasco are coming, too, as guests, and the Señora intends to bring with her four of the prettiest señoritas in Santa Fé to act as bridesmaids. How's that for a 'simple' wedding? The Señor and Señora Velasco themselves explained all these details to me, and I assured them Miss Deya would be delighted with all that had been planned for her!"

Danny had been out to call upon the Velascos. It would have been a gross breach of etiquette if he had not done so, friendly as they have shown themselves to be. There is an old duenna in the family, a humble relative, who is more concerned for the honor of the Velascos than the Señor or Señora themselves.

"The old woman went with me down to the gate," Danny said, "and she talked continuously."

"'*Sí, sí*, Señor! There will be great doings here, when the little Señorita comes — fêtes, and festal days and nights! But, alas! this place, it is not fit to receive guests so distinguished! Not as it was in the old days, — that was long ago, — but one can yet see what it must have been. Look you! the marble pavement, the benches, the fountain, all of them brought from old Spain! And here the walls of the old house — a *palacio*! — yes, burned and in ruins these hundreds of years, — since the family fled to Spain in the time of the great revolu-

tion. Yet are the ruins beautiful — see! — with the rose-vines climbing everywhere! Saw you ever such roses? And white roses! We did not know there were white roses growing here — never did they blossom, till this year! This year, of all the years! White roses for the bride who is coming to us! Surely!

"'The pretty Señorita, with the big grey eyes, the long black lashes, and the dusky hair — I do not need to ask you of her. Oh, yes, the Capitan Paost de Brys, he tell us of her. But it is not that! I have the vision of her — yes, in the night, — last night — but I was not asleep! It is the second-sight. *Sí, sí,* I have the power! Plain as I see you here before me, so last night I saw her! I saw the big moon hanging like St. Christopher's lantern in the sky, the torches flaring on the walls, the pavement here shining smooth as glass, and her pretty feet in red slippers twinkling over it in the dance, and the music such as to make even my old bones to shiver with the sweet desires of youth! And the little Señorita smiled upon me as she danced, with her lover-husband's arm about her, his eyes looking down upon her, — oh, she was happy, I promise you! It was a dress of red that she wore, and a red rose in her hair, like a true Spanish maiden. And they danced the stars out and the daylight in,

and the guests drank to the health of the bride and bridegroom, and to the honor and glory of the house of Velasco!'

"And I tell you, Deya," Danny said, "there was bewitchment on the tongue of that old woman! As sure as you were born, I saw what she described! Just as she spoke it, so I saw it, and just as she saw it, so I am sure it will really be. If she has not the 'second-sight,' how did she know about those red slippers and all that, that you have in that chest of yours?"

CHAPTER XLI

A CHAPEL AMONG THE ASPENS

FROM the hill above the camp, we can see the city lying, roseate, resplendent, in the warm rays of the late afternoon sun. Santa Fé! City of Romance, where Spanish Grandees held their semi-royal court centuries ago. Santa Fé! City of the Holy Faith, enshrined in the heart of the great Rockies, where bells were rung, and masses sung, while the eastern coast of the continent was as yet a wilderness, untrodden by the white man's foot.

With the glass I looked across to the north, following the course of the trail, out from camp, down the long barren slope to the bridge that spans the Santa Fé river, and from there up through the city to the Fonda. Uncle Pliny showed me where to look for the Chapels, the market-places, the *Palacio*, and, out under the bare and rugged foot-hills, the villa of the Velascos.

Uncle Pliny has no great admiration for this ancient city. He says the *Palacio* is altogether shabby, the Government buildings no better than

tumble-down soldier-barracks, and that even the churches are more than half in ruins.

But at this distance it is even as Oriental-looking and picturesque as I had hoped and expected to find it, — the red-tiled Spanish roofs, the gayly-painted walls, purple and pink and yellow, the tall spires of the poplar-trees, the heavily foliaged orchards and green corn-fields that crowd in close around the city, and in the far distance, the lofty snow-veined mountain peaks.

Truly it looks like one of Irving's magical towns on the banks of the Guadalquivir, — a city of romance, indeed! But just now it is not romance that occupies the thoughts of its citizens, but business! The market-place and all the streets are dark with swarming crowds of men, and the road between us and the city is sprinkled with groups of pilgrims, coming out to talk trade with our merchants.

The prices they are offering are preposterously high. Inwardly our men are jubilant, outwardly they are cool and non-committal.

"We make no bargains," they say, "till we see how prices are. There's no hurry. Our goods have kept for two months in the wagons, — they'll not spoil on our hands if we keep them a few days longer! Monday's time enough to talk of sales, and the prices are not likely to be lower!"

Thus they kept up their show of indifference, going on about their work, as if the camp were not running over with strangers anxious to bargain with them.

When Ernst and Rob and the Deacon at last came in from Santa Fé, Marienella and I had hardly a word for them. Vain and frivolous creatures that we were, all our thoughts were of the wedding finery that the Deacon had been commissioned to purchase for us.

First of all we saw Rob, with a quaint little brass-bound trunk on his shoulder, and he was carrying a half-dozen bulging paper parcels under his arms. Marienella gasped.

"Oh! he will surely crush all our pretty things, flat as the tortilla my mother bakes!"

She ran and took them from him, and hurried before him to the carriage. The Deacon detained me, to put in my hand a key — an ancient silver key.

"It is for the little trunk, which the Señora is sending to you. You see I had to go to her after all to ask what would be suitable for your wedding-gown. I could not choose! And she would not permit it that you should wear, for a wedding-dress, anything that could be purchased in the shops of

Santa Fé. Naught would do but that you must wear even the same gown that had been hers when she was a bride — and her mother wore it also, I think she said. Well, you will find it all in the letter, — in the trunk. Yes, it is right for you to accept the gift; she was so happy in bestowing it upon you!"

I hardly waited for the dear Deacon to tell me this much, and I forgot to thank him for the kindness he had shown, and for the trouble he had taken for me. I ran to the carriage, and tried to fit the key in the lock; it would not turn for me, but when Anna touched it, the hasp flew open at once.

When the lid of the trunk was raised, all we saw was a roll of old blue linen, with a note pinned to it, a note addressed to me. I read it while Anna was untying the strings of the neat little bundle.

In flowery Spanish phrases, overfull of compliment, the Señora begged me to accept the gift which "the Señor Gentry" was to bring.

"This was my wedding gown, — and my mother's also. When my mother wore it, — it was in the Royal Chapel at Madrid that she was married, — the young Prince Ferdinand complimented her on the beauty of her attire! And afterward, in the evening, he danced with her, and it was this gown that she

wore! So it has been kept as a treasure most precious. I have sons, but no daughter, except as I have taken thee to my heart. And thou wilt wear the dress, to give me pleasure, and keep it, that thy daughter may wear it after thee. The pearls, also, go with the dress. May they bring thee good fortune!"

I stood there, lost in dreaming! I was startled when Anna spoke to me. I put the Señora's letter inside my bodice, and knelt by Anna's side, to see and touch the wonderful gown, — the sweetest that maiden ever wore, — a plain slip of silk, and an overdress of muslin and lace, but the muslin was priceless stuff, sheer and delicate as gossamer, and the lace of the veil and flounces was a fairy fabric, such as Cinderella's godmother might have evoked from nothingness by the waving of her wand! I had never dreamed that there could be such airy stuff woven by human hands, so rich, so exquisitely fine, so altogether lovely. We touched it as if it were frost-work that would melt under the warmth of our fingers!

As we folded it and laid it away again in the trunk, we came upon a little white velvet handkerchief bag, and in this were the jewels of which the Señora had spoken. There was a necklet of big single pearls, and a long, slender, twisted rope of

seed pearls, for a girdle. They lay in my hands, gleaming, glistening, like tiny globes of dawn-tinted snow; and they clung caressingly to my palm, and to my cheek when I laid my face against them, as if they were beseeching me to wear them — and keep them.

Marienella's dress pleased her wonderfully. It is made in the latest style — eight yards around the hem, and flounced to the waist, and there is a wreath of pink rosebuds festooned over the "bertha," and there is a veil to go with it — a real Spanish lace mantilla!

Marienella, when she saw it, dropped upon the floor, and laughed and cried.

"Oh, it is too beautiful! What will my mother say, when she see these so beautiful clothes? But the dress — the veil — it is not of these I think most! It is of the goodness of everybody that I think — of you, my mistress, and of my Rob! He so splendid, so big, so strong! Yet he is of a kindness to me, such as I have never seen in any one! That make me to adore him, always!"

Marienella is cuddled down beside me as I write. The beads of her rosary are slipping, slowly, and more slowly, through her fingers. And with each bead, not one prayer, but two prayers, from two happy hearts, go up to our Father in heaven.

It was the middle of the night when Marienella wakened me, and whispered, "What you think it is the men are doing? Hear you not? The sound of chopping up on the hill? Why they be working at night? I not know why I cannot shut my eyes. I thinking about the things in that little trunk, I guess. Nothing happen to them — no of course. But, I think I like to see them — if maybe I not put them away neat like I should. If the Señorita give me the key, I will look, and be satisfy."

I took the key from the ribbon around my neck and gave it to her, and watched her, drowsily, as she knelt by the trunk, and counted over all the articles it contained. As she closed the lid I thought she repeated a prayer — but it was no prayer, it was a "charm-word," "to say for the good-luck."

"My grandmother, she tell that charm-word to me. I not say it very much. It wear out if you use it often! Only I think this best time of all to say it! Whether it be good, I know not but I say 'How can it do harm?' I will say my beads over again two times, and that make it good!"

She told her beads over again, as she had said, — and in the very next moment was asleep. But I lay there awake, wondering why the men should be working at night. Then I heard Danny's voice,

calling out directions to someone. If Danny were concerned in it, there was no use trying to guess what was in progress. I smiled to myself — and next I knew, I was lost in dreaming. I thought I had wandered into the garden of the Señora de Velasco, — and there was someone near me, playing on a lute, and singing, — and the song was the Song of Nourmahal —

"There's a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has told,
When two that are linked in one heavenly tie,
With heart never changing, and brow never cold,
Love on through all ills, and love on till they die!
One hour of a passion so sacred is worth
Whole ages of heartless and wandering bliss,
And oh, if there be an Elysium on earth,
It is this! It is this!"

I saw the singer — and it was the young Capitan, Paost de Brys! And suddenly there was a cry, and the garden was crowded! Crowded with all those whom I had ever known — Cousin Elinor was there, and Salathiel Deming, and all the Hazard girls, — and in and out through the crowd I was hurrying fast, looking for someone, — and I could not think who it was I was looking for ——

It was morning, and Marienella was shaking me gently to see if I was awake.

"I thought you like to know. The Señor Breunner

with the Señorita's brother is again called to Santa Fé, — yes, right at once they go! A man come with message. In Santa Fé there are yet more papers to be signed, for the Notary. Rob, he say that. The Señor de Velasco he send that word for the Señor Breunner and the Señorita's brother, and they not return till time for the wedding late this afternoon. And they and the guests, and the *Padre*, they will all come together. The Señor Breunner ask me if you awake: tell me not disturb you, — only if you not be asleep, I tell you he be waiting down at turn of the road."

She was helping me on with my slippers and my fresh morning gown. I tied the ribbons as I jumped down from the carriage, and never waited for my hat! My feet were shod with wings! I did not go around by the road. I took the shortest way, down over the rocks, almost straight from the skies — right into Ernst's arms!

We stood there at the edge of the high cliff, high above the valley. The sky was dappled over with flecks of cloud, gray and mauve and violet and rosy pink. There was no sun, as yet. Near at hand, between us and the east, towered two great hills, clothed thick with verdure. The cleft between them was a-dazzle with a glittering, golden veil of thin mist — and then the veil was swept aside to

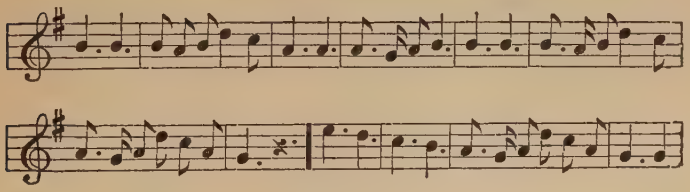
let the red sun, in his splendor, through! The twitter of innumerable sleepy bird-voices changed in that instant to a rapturous burst of melody; linnet and thrush and lark poured out their hearts in praises to the morn, as if they had never before beheld the miracle of dawn and sunrise!

John was calling us. He would only stand, and beckon us to come where he was, and when we had obeyed his summons, he showed us, around at the west side of the camp, a smooth grassy spot set about with a little grove of the quivering aspen. And here we saw what Danny and his friends had been working at, through the night. They had built a little woodland chapel of leafy pines, and there was a white-draped altar, banked with the tall spikes of the snowy Yucca-bells. There was incense in the air, the spicy breath of pine and cedar; the soft sighing of the quivering aspens was like a whispered prayer; and above and beyond, reaching high up into the heavens, were the everlasting hills of God. It was Sunday morning, — the morning of our wedding-day.

There were no words that we could say, no words that we needed to say. Ernst drew me to him, and in his eyes, — his clear blue eyes, — I read the vow whereby he gave his heart, his soul, into my keeping, forever, and forever! And in my heart I asked my

Father that he would make me worthy, — that He would bless and keep us both.

Anna and I have spent most of the day out on the hills. I have my book, but it is not my Journal that I am thinking of. There is a song in my heart, and on my lips, a song that seems to belong altogether to Ernst —"Du, du, liegst mir im Hertzen!"



"Thou, thou, reign'st in this bosom.
There, there, hast thou thy throne.
Thou, thou, know'st that I love thee.
Am I not fondly thine own?
Yes, yes, yes, yes!
Am I not fondly thine own?

Then, then, e'en as I love thee,
Say, say, wilt thou love me?
Thoughts, thoughts, tender and true, love,
Say wilt thou cherish for me?
Yes, yes, yes, yes,
Say wilt thou cherish for me?"

My head was against Anna's knee, — when she sprang to her feet, and drew me up beside her. She pointed down the long slope to the road that

leads out from the city. A cloud of white dust! A gay cavalcade in the midst of it! A dozen coaches — the foremost one like a royal equipage, all scarlet and gold, blazing bright in the sun's rays. They drew out to one side to let two eager horsemen by. We did not need to try to guess who those riders were, — we knew! Their eyes caught the flutter of Anna's blue veil against the dark background of the cliff. They tossed their caps in joyous salutation, and put their horses to the utmost speed. It was my brother, — and Ernst — *my Ernst.*

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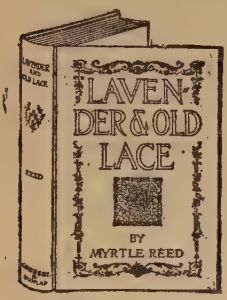

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